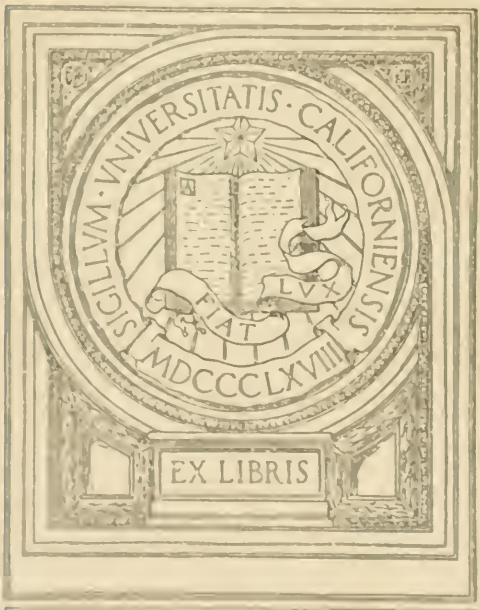
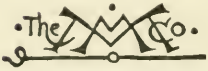
VICTOR CHAPMAN'S LETTERS FROM FRANCE

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA
AT LOS ANGELES



GIFT OF
Dr. Ernest Carroll Moore

VICTOR CHAPMAN'S LETTERS



THE MACMILLAN COMPANY
NEW YORK · BOSTON · CHICAGO · DALLAS
ATLANTA · SAN FRANCISCO

MACMILLAN & CO., LIMITED
LONDON · BOMBAY · CALCUTTA
MELBOURNE

THE MACMILLAN CO. OF CANADA, LTD.
TORONTO

Victor and His Mother

VICTOR CHAPMAN'S LETTERS FROM FRANCE

WITH MEMOIR

BY JOHN J. CHAPMAN

New York
THE MACMILLAN COMPANY
1917

All rights reserved

COPYRIGHT, 1917
BY THE MACMILLAN COMPANY

Set up and printed. Published May, 1917

Reprinted October, 1917

C 364

Dedicated to

WILLIAM ASTOR CHANLER

AND

AUGUST F. JACCACI

IN GRATITUDE FOR THEIR GOODNESS

TO MY SON

J. J. C.

Gift Dr E. C. Moore

193877

CONTENTS

PAGE

MEMOIR 3

THE LEGION 45

AVIATION 137

ADDENDA 193

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

Victor and His Mother . . . . . *Frontispiece*

Victor at Three . . . . . *Facing Page* 12

In Toy Harness 14

Country Friends 16

Home for the Holidays 20

Légionnaire 45

Life in the Legion 86

Aviation 137

MEMOIR

Great-hearted, loyal, reckless for a friend;
Not counting risks, cool handed, clear of sight,
He gave himself to serve a lofty end,
And, like an eagle soaring in the light,
On wings unruffled by the wind's chance breath
He sought, and seeks his goal with steadfast flight,
—Victor, indeed, in name, in life, in death!

John Heard, Jr.

MEMOIR

Victor Emmanuel Chapman, a member of the Franco-American Aviation Corps, was killed at Verdun on June 23, 1916, and fell within the German lines. He was in his twenty-seventh year; was born in New York, spent two years at the Fay School, went for several years to St. Paul's School, Concord, lived abroad for a year in France and Germany. On his return, he spent a year at the Stone School in Boston and then went to Harvard, where he graduated in 1913; immediately after graduation he went to Paris and studied architecture for one year in the atelier of M. Gromort, in preparation for admission to the Beaux Arts. This made him a Beaux Art student,—for the ateliers are a part of the school,—and thus it came about that in 1914 he joined the Foreign Legion.

Victor spent a year in the trenches at a point in the lines where there were no attacks, but where inaction and the continual " sniping " severely tried the nerves. Kohn, an accomplished Polish mathematician, was shot, as he and Victor were leaning over the *talus*. He died in Victor's arms. For over one hundred consecutive days Victor was in the front trenches as *aide-chargeur* to a *mitrail*. He was slightly wounded once, and one half of his squadron were either killed or seriously hurt. In Sep-

tember, 1915, he was transferred to the Aviation Corps. He served a short time as a bomb-dropper to aviators and was then sent to learn to fly at the instruction camps. He received his flying papers as Pilot in the following February.

The organization of the Franco-American Flying Corps was perfected at about this time, and Victor went to the front as pilot in company with Norman Prince, Elliott Cowden, William K. Thaw, Kiffin Rockwell, Bert Hall, James McConnell and others.

The history of the Franco-American Aviation Corps must be sought elsewhere; but the mention of it compels a word of admiration for its creator, Norman Prince. Prince was as brilliant as an organizer as he was as a fighter, and the patience of himself and the other young Americans who persisted in their idea of offering to the French Government an American Flying Corps, when they could, with much greater ease have gathered laurels for themselves in the French service, will in the future be recognized by our country as stamped with true patriotism. They clung through thick and thin to their idea of an American unit, and at last their offer was accepted. By this course they brought the name of America into honor and bound their glory on their country's brows.

Victor's mother was so remarkable a woman and so like him in many ways,—she was so much the author of the heroic atmosphere, a sort of poetic aloofness that hung about him and suggested early death in some heroic form,—that to leave her out

in any account of him would be to leave out part of himself. Her name was Minna Timmins, and her mother was an Italian, a Milanese lady who married a rich American and lived with him in Milan in the Sixties, during which time five children were born, of whom Minna was the eldest daughter. My knowledge of the early surroundings of their family depends naturally upon hearsay and tradition. They seem to have had everything handsome about them. They had Opera boxes, horses and carriages, menservants, fine linen and cut glass, and a silver tray four feet across which was brought into the drawing-room ready set and covered with urns, teapots and sugar bowls, being borne up by two staggering menservants,—to the vast satisfaction of Milan. The children lived in the *mezzanine,* and were packed into small rooms and allowed to appear upon show occasions. They were much left to servants, and they huddled together with fear when they heard the terrible ringing of their mother's hand-bell, summoning one servant after another to receive peremptory orders. The hand-bell signified that a tempest was raging, and tempests were frequent; for the mother (Victor's grandmother) was a demon of natural force with a will and temperament such as Italy sometimes produces, and a temper that was under no control. The swarm of young semi-Italians was neglected, from the point of view of American standards; and yet neglect was its advantage. The elder sister became the little mother of the brood, and her character and wits were thereby developed beyond

her years. Now, all this while, there was living in America, a wedded, rich and childless sister of Mr. Timmins, and upon his death, which occurred early and suddenly, it was found that this aunt and her husband, Mr. Martin Brimmer of Boston, had agreed to take the children, or some of them, to America. They arrived in several consignments during several years, and were sent to American schools,—all except the oldest boy, the mother's pet, who remained in Italy. Minna, a swarthy, fiery, large-eyed girl, who looked like the younger sybil of Michael Angelo, was sent with a sister to St. Agnes' School at Albany. She would have been like an eagle in a barnyard anywhere, and remained to the end of her life, which occurred when Victor was six years old, a classic figure, athletic, sweeping and impulsive. She "walked with her head in the clouds and her feet at the bottom of the sea." She read constantly and wrote diaries, letters, memoranda, abstracts of books and notes on lectures. She followed philosophical courses and made metaphysical studies down to the end of her life. I think there must be twenty note-books of every size and shape among her papers, crammed with musings, rhapsodies and dates. Her reading was miscellaneous, voracious and disordered; and her memoranda were like the leaves blown about the Cumean cavern by the winds of inspiration.

Yet for all this whirlwind which seemed to move in her steps, there was a central calm in her, a smiling majesty; and when I think of her it is as a tall young matron full of life, entering a room with gaiety, bear-

ing an armful of flowers for the pots and vases,—crowned with inner dignity, ready to meet the thoughts of all, domestic and full of common sense. It was life that glowed in her and flowed out in her correspondence, her friendships, her pursuits, her passions. Her vitality seemed like extravagance because of its fulness, but in her it was nature and the modesty of nature. I think that the rarity of her came from a sort of double endowment. She had the man-minded seriousness of women in classic myths, the regular brow, heavy dark hair, free gait of the temperament that lives in heroic thought and finds the world full of chimeras, of religious mysteries, sacrifice, purgation. This part of her nature was her home and true refuge. Here dwelt the impersonal power that was never far from her. There have been few women like her; and most of them have existed only in the imagination of Æschylus and the poets.

But Minna's seriousness was not the whole of her; and perhaps the part that is played on the stage is not the whole of Antigone and Medea. Within the priestess there lived a joyous nymph,—a kind of Euphrosyne; and this is what makes her doings indescribable, because, when she ran riot, it was the riot of the grape-vine. There was divinity in it.

She and her sister were exceedingly religious, with a touch of old world Catholicism which they had from an old padre whose name, if I could remember it, ought to be recorded here; for he lived in the memories of the sisters as one of those quiet Saints which the Roman Church still gives to the world.

The piety of this padre passed over into the Protestantism which awaited both of the girls. They lived in a sanctuary of prayer, religious books, observances, meditations. This world Victor inherited; for while he had not the intellect of his mother and was an inchoate nature, there was from his infancy to his death something about him of silence, mystery, godhead.

He continued to the end of his life to make the sign of the cross in saying the same prayers that she had taught him—which ended with the phrase—"and make me a big soldier of Jesus Christ who is the Lord and Light of the world." He folded his hands like a crusader as he said them. He was a part of the middle ages in this piety. His tiny trench-bible, which was full of pressed flowers and kodaks of his friends, was so much a miniature copy of his mother's bible that the little book seemed like the baby of the big one. To return to the Brimmer household, there was an extraordinary beauty in the relation of the two girls to the aunt and uncle who had saved them. The girls nourished and celebrated the older couple. They hung garlands about them and ran before them like fawns. In company with the Brimmers, the Timmins girls travelled much in Europe. The house in Boston was filled with pictures, bric-a-brac and educated people. There were sumptuous dinners, and elaborate evening receptions; for the Brimmer establishment was mounted luxuriously. In the midst of this social life the two girls continued a sort of inner conventual life of their

own. Their foreign origin made for them not an isolation but a retreat. Their tastes were by nature hardy, and they supported each other in being elemental Italian women, speaking to each other in a patois which had originally been Milanese Italian and which, of course, I learned in the course of time.

The younger sister, Gemma, was in every way a contrast to the elder. She was short, comparatively speaking blonde, very sweet and submissive and a born slave to the elder. Indeed she was so much overshadowed by Minna's dominant nature that it was not until Minna married that Gemma came into her own. The relation between them, though I think it encouraged the imperiousness of Minna, was an organic thing, and one which no philosophy could reach. They had grown up together like trees that are intertwined, and the branches of one shaded the other. There was a reminiscence of his mother's nature in Victor's friendships. He was always the leader, both leaning on and sweeping forward some subordinate nature who adored and followed. This matter gave me concern, but there was nothing to be done about it.

Minna was infinitely more expressive than Victor. She acted upon her impulses which were loving and headlong, tender or fierce, personal or impersonal as occasion gave rise to them, but always large, and done with a sweep. Some people she terrified by her force, others she melted by her warmth. She once met on a doorstep a very beautiful young girl of her

acquaintance, and who was wearing a new hat trimmed by herself with imitation sweet-peas. Minna was enraptured by the vision but the colors were wrong. Some of the tints in the sweet-peas were inharmonious. She took the hat from the head of the vision and picked off the offending colors one by one and threw them to the winds. Yet she did this in such a way as to endear herself and explain the action. She was an extreme example of that temperament which the Italians call *terrible,*—the temperament that speaks its mind on all occasions. The world does not imply a savage manner but an insuppressibility. Minna was capable of extraordinary social finesse. At a social function a very kind good Bostonian gentleman admired her dress and took the edge of it in his fingers. Both she and her sister wore dresses that were somehow reminiscent of Italy. This action of the admirer was the sort of trespass upon the person which deserved a rebuke—and she said, "*Tapissier?*"—but she said it with a smile and with so much benevolence that there was no sting in it.

I must admit,—what the reader will have surmised,—that her unconventionality and habit of spontaneous expression did not please all people. There are those who cannot enjoy nature in this geyser form. A friend reminds me of the following story, which is probably true. Minna and I were walking on Fifth Avenue, apparently engaged in moral discussion, when some one met us. It seems that she had taken the tortoise-shell pins out of her

hair, and her braids fell to her waist. Her plea was that she had a headache. My sense of propriety was shocked, and I was vainly supplying her with sound reasons for a more seemly behavior. At length I gave way to her point of view, took off my coat and carried it on my arm. This policy of non-resistance worked like a charm, and she put up her hair. I resumed my coat. Now it is impossible to make *all* persons understand a being of this sort. But on the whole, Minna was well understood and rightly all but worshipped by many.

She loved old people, and made a cult of various beautiful examples of old age who were then blessing Boston, and whom she went to see constantly; for, at the bottom of her soul, there was a passion of piety and reverence, which attached itself to persons who were serene. Her early maturity, brought about through pain, and which was strangely duplicated in her boy, made her a friend to those that suffered. I have forgotten to speak of her painting and drawing, her studios, her pilgrimages to visit strange saints and odd characters. Now, it was a man who made violins or who had a collection of early watches. Now, it was an old woman who had lost eight sons in the Civil War. The reverence she would cast into the accosting of the milk man, if for any reason her imagination was awakened, was a thing I have never seen in another and which, at this moment, fills me with awe. She could be rough too, and smite like Agag; and in case of some supposed injustice or meanness, she would smolder, flash and crash with

volcanic power. It wasn't she that did it: it just occurred.

Her sister was in a lingering and fatal illness at the time Victor was born. I think it was for this reason that his Christening was hurried. About nine days after his birth, his mother wrapped him in the pelt of a mountain cat and went to Boston for the Christening. Phillips Brooks was his god-father. Soon after this, Minna became possessed with the idea that if Gemma could be fed with milk from her own breast, she would be saved. I remember only the tragic passions of this crisis, and I do not know whether the plan was carried out or not; but I seem to remember another journey to Boston with this end in view.

Minna was immensely strong physically and would spend six hours on a step-ladder papering a room or hanging pictures. She sewed, hammered, sawed, painted, etched, gathered flowers, decorated and arranged indefatigably. Her passion for physical objects was a Mediterranean inheritance. She could never have enough of them; an object, once loved and collected, retained its significance and sanctity in her mind. Her little drawing-room, which my grandmother used to call a junk-shop, was really the catalogue and digest of her soul's history.

She was a great housewife and loved accounts, kept her bills and beat down the tradesmen like a peasant. I used to find my old friend and neighbor, Thomas Ward, the coal merchant, holding long sessions with her in the parlor. I used to say to him—"Mr. Ward, how can you make money on this sys-

Victor at Three

tem? "—But I suppose he did it somehow; for I had an affectionate letter from him at the time of Victor's death. Minna was also a believer, or half-believer, in astrology; and I have somewhere in a trunk a large engrossed horoscope of Victor, predicting for him almost incredible glory and greatness.

As soon as Victor was born, he became the idol and slave of this Sybil. He was a swarthy child, all eyes, and his eyes shone like stars, and he was generally in tears. The Sybil took him with her wherever she went, mopped his tears and got him so that he would forbear to weep so long as she was by. If she left him for a half hour, however,—there were the eyes and the tears. His slowness at book-learning made him the despair of infant schools, and his aptitude for getting into danger made him the terror of nurses and guardians. That there was something very remarkable about the child everyone felt; but his melancholy gave us concern. When he was eight years old, there was trouble with a canary. His great-grandmother, who made a pet of Victor and used to send him notes and picture-cuttings from the daily press, said something disparaging about the canary in one of her notes. Victor dissolved into tears, muttering: " The canary is better than I." This fathomless humility he retained through life, as well as a portion of his melancholy.

When Victor was six years old his mother died suddenly in child-birth, and Victor, who had lived in her as an egg lives in its shell, who had scarcely ever been out of her sight or hearing—for she dragged

him about as a lioness drags her cub—was left suspended in an unknown universe, with his grief and his visions. He mourned, as sometimes a child will mourn in inaccessible solitude, pining and sinking deeper and deeper into a stupor. He would stand silently by the window for hours and hours with unshed tears in his eyes, watching the sky and the street. A loving Irish maid-servant, still with us, said to him, "Victor, what are you thinking about when you stand like that?" He replied, quietly, "I am thinking of some one, and you know who."

His earliest schoolmistress, Miss Buck, writes me as follows: "I felt he was cut out for sometthing unusual, he seemed to *ponder* so over life. It was during that winter that his mother died, and although he was so little, only six or seven, I felt that he had to fight out his troubles alone. It seemed to me that it would be intruding to try to talk to him as one might to most little fellows. I have a very weird mental picture of the thin little face and wondering eyes he used to turn up to me, and I remember once I found him sitting on the steps of the school-house in the drizzling rain, and how shocked I was to find him there: and yet I could not baby him. I took him in and talked to him about facing things and he went home alone to try to help his little brother. He seemed a generous spirit even then, and when I saw his death in the paper, before I had time to reason that it was tragic, it seemed a fitting end to a life destined from the outset for something requiring unusual strength of character, and one of those

In Toy Harness

events that do not cause surprise because the mind at once realizes they must have happened."

Victor always regarded me with piety; but as for being nourished and fed by my ministrations, it was out of the question. Not until his stepmother had lived with him and over him for several years did the mystic past begin to fade and the new world open around him. He had a brother, also Minna's child, two years younger than himself, and the two were passionately fond of each other. The younger was shy, brilliant, blond, handsome as a prince, and quite a genius at painting. When Victor was twelve, the younger was drowned almost before his eyes in the torrent of a rapid river. The child had been left alone by Victor for a moment, could not swim, and must have lost his balance and fallen into the flood.

Here was grief indeed and the world lost once more, for a morbid child with no apparent talents and a gift of suffering such as few natures possess. The loss of this little boy rearranged the universe for the family in such measure as those know who have passed through the experience, and during the long cataclysm, Victor was not especially considered, though he had the bitterest end of it, for he always wondered whether somehow he had not been to blame. But youth is youth and survives, and within a few years, Victor became a dull and weedy schoolboy, much alone, fond of the woods and of nature, an open air creature, a young wild animal. He would harness a gennet to a double runner and drive at a gallop about the countryside, standing on the sled

and brandishing whips of his own manufacture. Indeed in his earlier years he had sought the fields. Soon after my second marriage, a guest in the house discovered, what none of us knew, that Victor, aged about nine or ten, was in the habit of rising at daybreak and roaming the countryside. "Victor," said the lady to him, "why do you do this?" "Because it is the best time of the day," he said. "The light is muzzy and all the creatures are out."

Victor never really felt that he was alive except when he was in danger. Nothing else aroused his faculties. This was not conscious, but natal,—a quality of the brain. As some people need oxygen, so Victor needed danger. I have seen him walk on the roof-tree of a barn—with his younger brother (the painter, who had no aptitude for such feats) walking behind him; and my heart gave a squeeze as if some one had taken it in a monkey-wrench. We were always saving him, and I had always a greater fear for the younger one than for him. Everyone thought Victor bore a charmed life and you couldn't convince his contemporaries that any harm could befall him, so constantly would he fall from the top of a pine tree and guide himself by the branches as they broke under him. My sister-in-law on one occasion saw, while walking on the lawn, the silhouette of Victor, aged 12, dancing upon the gutter of the mansard roof. He was fighting with a nest of hornets whom he had disturbed, but he did not lose his presence of mind as he beat a retreat. An English friend, the Rev. Mr. Dalrymple, who acted as tutor to Victor during

Country Friends

a visit to England, writes to me, commenting on Victor's presence of mind and *sang froid* at the age of ten. During an excursion on the Thames the boy managed to fall into the water from a rowboat, and had, as his tutor thought, a narrow escape from drowning. On being fished out the water Victor remarked that it was lucky he had worn his wash-suit.

His boyhood showed many life-saving incidents to which little attention was paid, and of which no record was kept,—the saving of a child from drowning at a picnic, the rescue of his small brother from between cars that were being coupled, etc. The following letter from John Temple Jeffries, a classmate at Harvard, was printed in the Boston Transcript soon after Victor's death.

"The death of Corporal Victor Chapman in an aeronautical battle in France means much more than the loss of merely one American gentleman, though that in itself is bad enough. It means the loss of a man who had all the noble and chivalrous instincts in such overwhelming proportions that it was literally impossible for him to act like the average person. It was as though Prince Rupert or Richard Plantagenet himself had stepped down from history. Chapman never could bridle his intrepidity enough to avoid all rows, and he never could suppress chivalry enough to be really politic. He was, besides, a born soldier, with all the snap and alertness of militarism. His unerring instinct in art would have brought him the highest honors inside of fifteen years.

"Just five years and a half ago, I think, Chapman declined to follow me across some ice floes half a

mile out to sea because the going was palpably unsafe, and inside of ten minutes he had saved my life by returning and working out to sea till he finally hooked me out from the icy water on the muzzle end of a loaded and cocked rifle. Nothing could be more typical of him. His death in France resulted from again trying to save his friends' lives.

"If long and distinguished ancestry, the presence of all a man's virtues and the absence of all vices count for much, then Harvard has lost one of the greatest gentlemen that ever studied at that university."

I have the following story from one of his comrades in the Foreign Legion. When Victor was in the trenches, his Captain, upon one occasion, had to take a pistol to him to prevent his attempting the rescue of a comrade who was engulfed in a neighboring mine explosion. Victor's anger was so great at being withheld from doing what seemed to him the merest act of decency that, in the words of the relator, "*Il en est devenu malade.*"

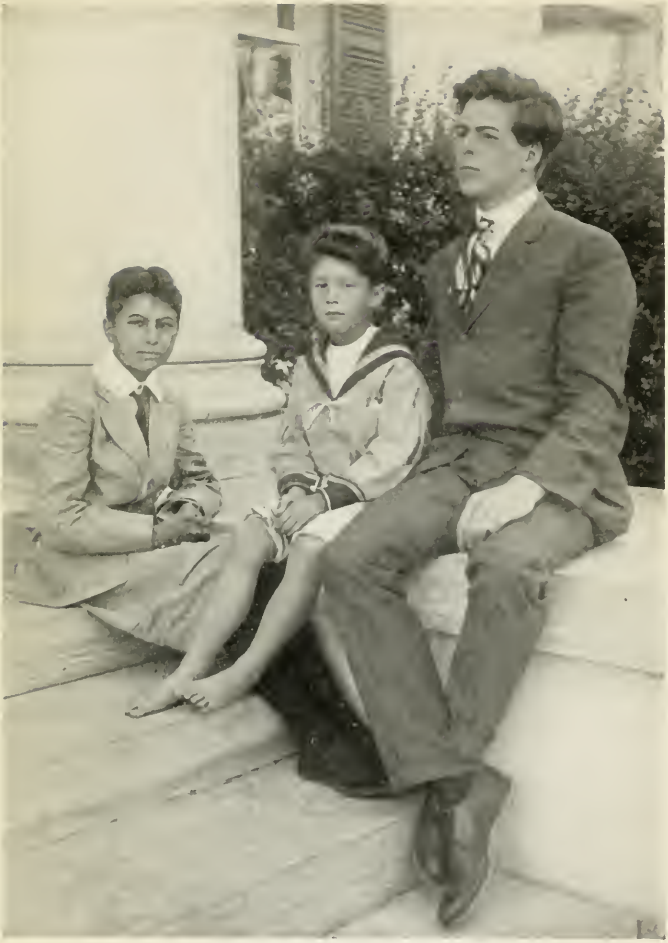
He had no aptitude for sports, none for books, none for music; but always a deep passion for color and scenery, and a real talent for all forms of decoration, which we hoped would lead him toward painting or architecture. His water-color sketches, done in 1913–14 in Paris, showed a great advance on earlier work; but the dreamer was still in his dream,—and art is concentration. His pleasure was in scenery. If you could place him in a position of danger and let him watch scenery, he was in heaven. I do not think he was ever completely happy in his life till the day he got his flying papers.

It will be seen that Victor belonged to a well-known type of nature which develops slowly. All those necessary stimuli which the world has invented to encourage the ambition and awaken the intelligence of boys were applied to him in the approved manner, both at home and at various schools, but fell upon him as appeals to a sleeping thing,—disturbing, sad and terrible voices. Whether they could ever have called him out of his own world into ours cannot be known. As it is, the few " trivial fond records " of him which survive, give us a glimpse into the cloudy, starry place he lived in. During the last few years, I was sometimes disturbed by his lack of interest in women and by his relations to them, which were either social or seraphic—for he was an angel in these matters of sex. He was untouchable and world-wise even from early youth. In the understanding of other people's sorrows, he was wise beyond his years and as discreet as an oak tree.

As an influence upon his younger brothers, he displayed the qualities, one might say, to all the different ages at once. He was youthful, benign, humorous, astute, far-sighted, impersonal and affectionate. He was of course regarded by them as a demigod, partly because they were clever and he was not clever, only large. There was something like a big dog about him, a helpless quality. He needed attention; and inactivity brought with it sad moods and the phantom hounds of inner reproach. Not that he ever did anything to deserve reproach,—except the giving

way to this very inactivity. I recall, as I write, certain rare, short outbursts of unmeaning fierceness which passed over him,—as in a wolf that is domesticated. At such times he would speak strangely to those who loved him most. For me he had that extreme piety toward the parent which prevails in Semitic tribes. He was also very fond of me, and proud of me; and our relations were perfect. Yet once in two years he would unexpectedly bark at me and paw the ground, as if I and the whole universe I lived in were intolerable to his soul. When he was a small boy these gusts of passion alarmed me, and I used to warn him that he might kill his best friend in one of them, and then become a prey to everlasting remorse. But in fact he never took action while in these fits. They were explosions of an energy which darkly collected in him and which needed ambition as its outlet.

The controlling influence of his life was his stepmother, to whom most of the letters are written. The nick-name, *Alse,* was a corruption of *Aunt Elizabeth.* She was nearer to him than any one else, and understood him better than any one else, and was, in fact, the only person who had his complete confidence. I have often thought that his own mother might not have been so gentle or so patient with his baffling slowness of development as was this dedicated stepmother, who accepted the strange child as a sacred legacy,—until he grew to be quite truly her own son. It was Victor's relation to her that gave unity to the family.



Home for the Holidays

Let Victor serve some one and he leaped with great bounds to do it. He would put up a woodshed, or build a pier, if there were an excuse for being useful. In his physical force, large frame, and need for manual labor, he resembled his mother, and there was something in him that always reminded me of Milton's lines:—

> " Tells how the drudging Goblin sweat
> To earn his cream-bowl duly set,
> When in one night, ere glimpse of morn
> His shadowy flail had threshed the corn
> That ten day-laborers could not end;
> Then lies him down the lubber fiend,
> And stretched out all the chimney's length,
> Basks by the fire his hairy strength;
> And cropful out of door he flings,
> Ere the first cock his matin rings."

Victor could eat anything, sleep on anything, lift anything, endure anything. He never had enough of roughing it till he joined the Foreign Legion, and his year in the trenches made him taller, straighter, compacter, and gave him the walk, smile and eye of a self-confident man. It was the *cause* that made a man of him. Here was a thing that was big enough.

Just before his enlistment in August, 1914, there occurred a scene between Victor, his stepmother and myself, which was our domestic part of the great war drama. No doubt millions of families on which the wheels of fate were then turning, can recall similar little dramas in which the dies of life and death were

thrown for them. We were all in a London hotel, having fled the Continent at the mobilization. The English people were singing the Marseillaise in front of the Parliament Houses. Victor had been prowling about in a lonely way for twenty-four hours, and he now, with a sort of hang-dog humility, suggested that he was going to enlist. I reasoned with him. With that stupidity which is the natural gift of parents, I probed his conscience and suggested that perhaps it was merely a random desire to see life and get rid of his serious duties that led him to the idea of enlistment. He concurred, with dumb diffidence, and said: "No doubt this must be it." My wife says that I called him a quitter and held him up to the scorn of just men. But my own idea was that I was only preventing the lad from doing something which was not fundamentally his duty. He submitted. I supposed he was merely being rational; but there was a something in his voice and manner, something, I know not what, of a soul-tragedy, that struck his stepmother and gave her a vision of a ruined life. And as soon as Victor had left the room, she said: "He has submitted through his humility and through his reverence for you. But I had rather see him lying on the battlefield than see that look on his face." Within a week, he was in France.

At the time of his enlistment and during his entire service, he received advice, assistance and constant care from my wife's brother, William Astor Chanler, then living in Paris, who became for him rather a second father than an uncle. The old buccaneer and

the young one understood each other perfectly, as may be seen in many of Victor's letters, which concern boots, periscopes, eye-glasses, under-clothes, chocolate and small talk. Victor seems to have commandeered every resource of his uncle with the confidence of a spoiled child. He treated Augustus F. Jaccaci, then in Paris, with much the same freedom. Victor never seems to thank either of them, but to live upon them as on conquered territory.

The following sketch by Alexandre Mavroudi, which appeared in the French Journal, *l'Opinion,* of July 1, gives a picture of Victor's life in the Legion. The material was furnished by a fellow *Légionnaire* and great friend of Victor's, Kisling the Polish painter.

During the first days of the war Chapman's company was set to digging trenches in the neighborhood of Paris. The young Yankee set to work with incredible vim. He chopped, hacked and digged, hour after hour without a pause. The captain noticed him. "Say, you there, were you a ditch-digger in private life?" "You're off there, captain," said a bystander, "he's a millionaire." But Victor Chapman had the American point of view about money. Money is for necessaries, for gay whims and to help a friend. Money relieves no one from work, obligation or duty. Money multiplies energy, but should never paralyze it.

"Chapman, you're on the potato squad today." "Good, come along!" And the rich American starts peeling potatoes rapidly, conscientiously, as if he had done nothing else all his life.

After some weeks of training his regiment left Paris for the front. Chapman was a *mitrailleur*. He had to set up his gun in a shelter; with the help of a Polish comrade, the mathematician Kohn, he set to work building the shelter. You would think he had the paws of a beaver. The walls rise on the sight; in three days the cabin is ready. But a window-sill is lacking. Where can one be found? Chapman starts on a search in a neighboring village and comes back with a wonderful Louis XVI sill on his shoulder. The cabin became the reading-room of the section. He received almost all the Paris newspapers and magazines, not to speak of novels and volumes of poetry. One day he also received a book from America. Chapman undid the parcel, and buried himself in his cabin, when he came out some hours later he was joyful, exuberant; he had read at a sitting the anti-German book that his father had published in New York to enlighten those fellows over there.

But more trenches had got to be digged, more passageways, more cellars. The havoc caused by the enemies' guns must be repaired from day to day. The *Légionnaires* worked hard, and Chapman hardest of all. At night we saw his figure outlined against the darkness, and the sound of his pick-axe broke the stillness while all others slept. Chapman had come "to work" against the Germans and he did it with all his might.

One morning he felt a twinge in his arm and something warm running down inside his sleeve. "Hello! I've a ball in my skin." He had it bandaged by a comrade, and never thought of going to the Surgeon. The Surgeon looked him up. "You're to be sent to the rear." "Why?" "To be looked after at the hospital." "My friend understands bandaging as well as a nurse. Let us attend to it, Sir. I don't

want to play hookey." Chapman's theory was that every man who had an ounce of strength left in him and who left the front line was shirking.

One day a *mitrailleur* came up to him saying, " I'm sick. The major has ordered me to drink milk for two weeks; but there isn't any here. They're going to send me to the rear, and I'm bored with the notion." " Good," said Victor. " Stay where you are: I'll settle it." At dinner time Chapman disappeared. That evening the section saw him returning accompanied by a cow which he was dragging behind him. " I bought her so that you could get your milk," said he to the sick *mitrailleur*. " Now you can stay with us." Chapman was the Mæcenas of the regiment, the master of revels, the friend of all.

His high spirits were contagious. He was only seen to weep once. It was the day his chum, Kohn, the mathematician, was mortally wounded. Chapman carried him in his arms to the first aid. " Save him, sir," he cried, his voice broken with sobs, " and I'll give you a hundred thousand francs." The Major surgeon was too cut up even to smile. " All is over, my friend, control yourself."

Victor's entry into the American Aviation was, to him, like being made a Knight. It transformed,—one might almost say,—transfigured him. That the universe should have supplied this spirit with the consummation which it had sought from infancy and should have given, in a few weeks, complete happiness and complete fulfillment,—the crown of a life to which one can imagine no other perfect ending,—is one of the mysteries of this divine age. We see the crushing misery of much that is in progress. Let us also see the new releasing into humanity of infinite

courage, hope and power. I have not sought to sift out the true story of his last fight. That he set out to the rescue of his companions I can well believe. He was himself rescued many times by them in previous combats. To go to each other's rescue was their daily and hourly business.

If Victor could have known the way in which his death has brought special notice upon him, he would have been amazed, ashamed,—nay, have been rough and unpleasant about it. All true soldiers feel like this. They feel that they are enclosed within a force not themselves, and form a part of a sort of church triumphant—though they can often express themselves only by swearing. Praise strikes them as a lie, if not as a kind of blasphemy. All the men fighting for the Allies, and especially all those young Americans who have been fighting for France and England, and thereby doing more for their own country than for Europe, should be in our minds when we think of any one of them. They form a single soul and spirit.

The enthusiasm which broke out in France at the time of Victor's death, and was reflected in this country, was due to many causes. He was the first American aviator to fall. He was killed just before the fourth of July, 1916. His year in the Legion had made him known to many, and the fighting qualities of the newly-formed American Escadrille had already given that body a place in history. These American Volunteers whom we had thought might be lost in the mêlée were thus received into the light

where burned the soul of the war; in their death they were canonized. The great fact behind all was this: the French people were living in a state of sacrificial enthusiasm for which history shows no parallel. Their gratitude to those who espoused their cause was such as to magnify and exalt heroism. The French press blazed with spontaneous pæans. The American Church became, as it were, the shrine of both nations at Victor's funeral on July 4th.

Piety compels me to reprint some of the French tributes; because they were made not to Victor, but to the American people.

The following is from Mme. le Verrier: "I have just left the Church in the Avenue d'Alma, after attending the service in honor of your son. The ceremony was very touching in its simplicity. The chancel was draped with two great flags and decorated with flowers; two small flags and other flowers were on the altar. The women about me were in tears. It was a sad celebration of your Independence Day, and brought home to me the beauty of heroic death and the meaning of life.

"When we first learned of the event, and after the first moment's stupor had passed, we felt a renewal of energy. Everyone is talking of this disinterested devotion,—much greater even than that of our own men, who are fighting for their own country as well as for ideal ends. But the self-sacrifice of this one who comes to us, and places himself at our side, for no other reason than to make right triumph over wrong, is worthy of peculiar honor. It comforts

those who are in the struggle and shows the road to those who doubt. On all sides people speak with admiration and gratitude of the details, tragic and touching as they are, of his trip to his friend, of the little basket of oranges, of his headlong plunge to save his comrades. America has sent us this sublime youth and our gratitude for him is such that it flows back upon his country. Wherever I go I am asked about him. Never since the outbreak of the war has public sentiment been more deeply aroused."

Mr. Briand, the prime minister of France, in speaking at the Banquet of the American Chamber of Commerce in Paris on the evening of July 4, paid a long tribute to the United States and instanced the various kinds of aid that its citizens had given to France. In the course of his address he spoke of the American aviators, and mentioned Chapman as "the living symbol of American idealism." "France," he said, "will never forget this new comradeship, this evidence of a devotion to a common ideal."

On July 7, the president of the French Republic sent me a telegram as follows. "I beg to offer you my perfect sympathy. In your son who has died in the most just of all causes I hail a worthy rival of the brothers in arms of Lafayette."

Mr. Jusserand, the French Ambassador at Washington, said at the banquet on Lafayette Day, New York, Sept. 6, 1916. "Never in my country will the American volunteers of the Great War be forgotten; some, according to their power, offering their pen, or their money, or their help to our wounded, or

their life. There is not one form of suffering, among the innumerable kinds of calamities caused by a merciless enemy, that some American work has not tried to assuage. In the hospitals, in the schools for the maimed and blind, in the ruins of formerly prosperous villages, on the battlefields, in the trenches, nay, in the air, with your plucky aviators, the American name is blessed; in the trenches—where those kits named after the hero of to-day, the Lafayette Kits, have brought comfort to so many soldiers, in remembrance of what Lafayette himself had done in his time.

" You are indeed a nation that remembers. When Lafayette revisited West Point in 1825, one of the orators alluded to his having provided shoes for the army at Valley Forge and proposed this toast: ' To the noble Frenchman who placed the Army of the Revolution on a new and better footing.' More than one of our soldiers is, owing to you, on a better footing.

" Serving in the Ambulances, serving in the Legion, serving in the air, serving Liberty, obeying the same impulse as that which brought Lafayette to these shores, many young Americans leaving family and home, have offered to France their lives. Those lives many have lost and never, even in antique times, was there shown such abnegation and generosity, such firmness of character; men like Victor Chapman who dies to rescue his American and French coaviators nearly overcome by a more numerous enemy . . . or that Richard Hall killed by a shell while

on the search for our wounded, and whose mother hesitated to accept a permit to visit his flower-wreathed tomb at the front, ' because French mothers are not allowed to do so; ' or that Harvard graduate, the poet of the Legion, Alan Seeger, who felt that his hour could not be far remote, and who, in the expectation of it, had written from the blood-soaked battlefield where he had fought for liberty: ' The Frenchman who goes up is possessed with a passion beside which any of the other forms of experience that are reckoned to make life worth while seem pale in comparison. . . . It is a privilege to march at his side—so much so that nothing that the world could give could make me wish myself anywhere else than where I am.' "

M. Emile Boutroux, the venerable dean of French Philosophy, wrote an article for *Le Temps* of July 5, in which after sketching the early stages of the American Escadrille, he said: " It was this picked corps that Victor Chapman joined after six months of apprenticeship. How happy he was at this chance of working, fighting and being useful with all the powers he possessed I could judge from the visit he paid me shortly afterwards. His simplicity and good humor were charming. I complimented him on his French. ' Oh,' said he, ' my French is the French of the *poilus;* I don't understand all the words I use, and I'm not sure they are all used in the polite world, but of course I speak as my comrades do.' It would be impossible to unite more of the gaiety and tranquility of youth, more sweetness and

simplicity, with more decision and the energy of character than Victor Chapman showed. He was eminently a soldier. In a service where one is thrown upon one's own resources, he was duty incarnate, he thought only of doing the business in hand as well as possible and in contempt of all danger. His intrepidity was extreme; and in the midst of the nervous tension which such expeditions give rise to, he retained an absolute composure and presence of mind."

After giving some accounts of the fighting, Mr. Boutroux concludes: "Such is the devotion, such are the high principles, such is the simple and true grandeur of which the American soul is capable. Such also are the reverence, the profound love which France inspires in men who are an honor to humanity. What recompense can our labors have, equal to the testimony of this kind, borne by witnesses like these! No; the great interpreters of the human conscience were not mistaken. To die, rather than betray the cause of right and justice, this is not to die, but to become immortal. It means not merely to live in the imagination of posterity, but to leave behind one those deeds of faith and virtue which, soon or late, assure the triumph of right."

I add a few letters and sketches, which the general reader may skip if so inclined, but toward which he will be indulgent, remembering that a volume of this kind always serves as a little memorial for family and for friends. The first is a dictation taken down by Mr. Jaccaci from the lips of Louis Bley, Victor's

mécano. The document is so striking in the original French, that I have reprinted it in a page of appendix. One feels in reading it that each flyer is the bravest of all in the eyes of his devoted *mécano*.

"That day, the day of his death, there was a *sortie* over Verdun in the morning. Chapman was in it, and returned at nine o'clock, making a rough landing, which resulted in breaking a sandow. But just then they signalled us that the Boches were coming over Bar-le-duc. I was repairing the sandow, but he took all my tools from me and threw them away, saying, 'Leave that alone, I must go and see the Boches.' I told him that he couldn't go with the broken sandow, and that I wouldn't stand for it, as that state of things was too dangerous; he might capsize, or have an accident in landing. For answer he said, 'It's all one to me capsizing,'—which meant, 'It's all one to me if only I can down a Boche.' But he didn't get off. After this he went to lunch, and since there was to be a *sortie* at half-past twelve, I changed his sparking plugs. He returned at twelve fifteen and asked if the machine was ready. I said yes. He was delighted, and said he would try it. He gave me a big bundle of newspapers with some oranges and chocolate and said, 'I shall take a turn over the lines, and when I get back I shall stop at Vatlincour (behind Verdun), I shall take the oranges and chocolate to poor Balsley at the hospital, for I think there is little hope of saving him." Then I put the package, the oranges and chocolate in place for him to carry to his comrade. He shook hands

with me and was off, saying, 'Au revoir, I shall not be long.'

"Two days before, they were mending his machine-gun, but seeing his companions fly off, he ran to his machine, jumped in and he went off without his combination,—that is, in his ordinary clothes, above the enemies' lines.

"On his former trip over Verdun, which he made with his 80 horsepower machine, he was wounded by a ball that grazed his scalp; a trifle lower down and he would have been killed. In this *sortie* a ball had cut the warping control, a bullet had cut the turn-buckle of a wing and pierced a wheel; an explosive bullet had passed through the support which holds up the top plane; an explosive bullet had passed through the wind-shield and a bullet had grazed the varnish of the *fuselage* and it was this last bullet which grazed his skull.

"He came down at Vatlincourt to have the wound dressed, and returned to our barracks at Bar-le-Duc at half-past three, and as there was to be a *sortie* over Verdun at four he wanted to be off again in spite of his wound. Captain Thenault forbade this; and for his courage promised him a machine of 110 horsepower. Chapman was very happy. It was on the Verdun *sortie* with this machine that he was killed.

"Once at Luxeuil-les-Bains he came in after an explosive bullet had passed through the body of the *fuselage,* come out on the side, and exploded against the turn-buckle. This same time a bullet entered his left sleeve and passed through, grazing the flesh

and slightly burning the skin. The afternoon of the same day, after another *sortie,* he returned with a bullet through the aluminum bonnet of the motor. In order not to be visible in his new machine (this 80 horsepower machine was an entirely white machine, the 110 was painted green like grass), he had amused himself two days before his death by scratching off the green paint with a coin of ten centimes, so as to make the machine less visible. I, his mechanician, had painted the *fuselage* a pale gray. The paint was not dry next day when Chapman learned that the Boches were over Verdun, and was off all the same with the paint wet. I didn't like this, and told him he had better wait. He refused, and said, 'Who cares for paint! If I bring down my Boche, that's as good as a new coat of paint.'

"Once he attacked a Boche and came within twelve feet of him. He told me that his propeller almost touched the upper plane of the Boche, and he could have shot him point blank with his revolver, which he had by him always when he flew, but he couldn't get it from the case while manœuvering.

"Another time he was three hours and twenty minutes over the German lines, and came down with only three litres of gasolene in his tank,—a very dangerous thing.

"Once he flew on one day for seven hours over the German lines. He made 70 miles in the air with his 80 horsepower machine without breaking anything. He was a marvellous pilot. Whether on guard or not, as soon as the Boche flyers were signalled, he

would jump into his machine and was off. There was not another like him.

" For flights over the German lines he was always the first to start and the last to come home, and always flew alone. If one of his comrades was in danger he rushed to his aid. But he himself never noticed whether he was followed up or supported. He was the bravest of all.

" Once he ran into fifteen Boche planes, and flew at them, aiming at the bunch. When he came back Captain Thenault scolded him, but he took it lightly. His answer was always, ' If I can get a Boche.' "

The following is an extract from a long and generous letter from Captain Thenault, Captain of the American Escadrille. " Our grief was extreme for we loved him deeply. At the moments of greatest danger in the air we could always discover the silhouette of his machine, that machine which he managed with so much ease. One of my *pilotes* has just said to me, ' Would that I had fallen instead of him.' With the army at Verdun his bravery was legendary, and hardly a day passed without some exploit from which he returned with his machine pierced by bullets and sometimes slightly wounded himself. He was to have received the *Medaille Militaire* when death took him. A *citation* with the *croix de guerre* will speak for a small part of what he did."

The following sentences are from a letter of Sergeant McConnell of the American Escadrille to Henry M. Suckley, of the American Ambulance

Corps (afterwards decorated for conspicuous bravery under fire, and recently killed near Saloniki). I preserve them because they would have pleased Victor. "We are all terribly grieved over the death of poor old Victor. He was the best and bravest of us all and I admired him more than any man I knew. He was a wonderful character, and a great loss to the world as well as to the French Army. As a soldier he was the most conscientious I have ever known."

The following letter is from my friend M. André Chevrillon, the French author:

My dear Chapman:

I cannot tell our grief. I had the news only yesterday—on my return from the British front by a letter from my wife; and in the evening the *Temps* gave fuller particulars. I enclose the cutting. It is short, but what it says is among the things of this war that will sink deepest in the memory of our people. No soldier's death in our modern battle has so much of the truly epic as the feat and the fate that are described here. They carry us back to the legendary times in which everything was pure and beautiful—to the time of the Mediæval Knight who ran, single-handed, with his cry of *"A la rescusse!"* to the help of a surrounded and overwhelmed confederate—to the time of Roland and his *preux,* nay, of the Greek, Homeric hero. That word hero is now commonly used for all those who die on the battlefield,—but they are the obscure heroes, of whom the numbers only and nothing individual will be recorded by history. The death fight of Victor Chapman touches our imagination with fire. Be assured that his name will stand forever in France. He died

whilst rescuing,—*encombat singulier,*—three Frenchmen. That name will become a new symbol, and far more moving than any of the old links between our nations, and the name of America will partake of its glamour. Morally the sacrifice more than makes up for all that you resented so much in the attitude of your present government. You may indeed be proud of your son. In those last minutes of his life he rose to the front rank of what we call here our Saints: he carved his own statue; it has the essential simplicity of the supremely beautiful.

And we also are proud to have known him. He used to come to us quite simply, dropping in like an old friend; and the fact is that from his first visit we felt as if we had known him for years. He learned to feel more at home in our St. Cloud house, which is almost country. My wife felt with him as if he was one of her big nephews, and the children had a shout of joy when they heard his voice downstairs. We loved him for his simplicity, his gentleness, his modesty, his perfect tact, and what we guessed of his courage. Only once did we perceive that he knew his risk. Some one asked him if he would go on in France with his art studies after the war. He seemed for a moment to hesitate, and a sort of vagueness came over his look, as he just repeated slowly, "After the War. . . .," without adding another word. The next moment he was talking merrily of something else. But we remembered that broken sentence, the sudden and chief change in the look, and we knew that he knew the whole risk, and had looked straight at the sacrifice. We shall never forget him, and we mourn with you both. And yet it is of such a death that it has been said, "One should not weep."

ANDRÉ CHEVILLON.

June 30, 1916.

Of all the men that Victor met in the aviation

corps Kiffin Rockwell was the dearest to him. He envied Rockwell for having been in the great charge made by the Legion in May; and worshipped Rockwell's courage and romantic spirit. When Rockwell fell, soon after Victor's death, I felt as if Victor's soul was but a little way above Kiffin's head, and "stayed for his to keep him company."

Escadrille N. 124, Secteur 24.
August 10, 1916.

My dear Mrs. Chapman: I received your letter this morning. I feel mortified that you have had to write me without my having written you before, when Victor was the best friend I ever had. I wanted to write you and his father at once, and tried to a number of times. But I found it impossible to write full justice to Victor or to really express my sympathy with you. Everything I would try to say seemed so weak. So I finally said, "I will just go ahead and work hard, do my best, then if I have accomplished a lot or been killed in accomplishing it, they will know that I had not forgotten Victor, and that some of his strength of character still lived." There is nothing that I can say to you or anyone that will do full credit to him. And everyone here that knew him feels the same way. To start with, Victor had such a strong character. I think we all have our ideals when we begin but unfortunately there are so very few of us that retain them; and sometimes we lose them at a very early age and after that, life seems to be spoiled. But Victor was one of the very few who had the strongest of ideals, and then had the character to withstand anything that tried to come into his life and kill them. He was just a large, healthy man, full of life and goodness toward life, and could only see the fine, true points in life and in other people. And he was not of

the kind that absorbs from other people, but of the kind that gives out. We all had felt his influence, and seeing in him a man, made us feel a little more like trying to be men ourselves.

When I am in Paris, I stay with Mrs. Weeks, whose son was my friend, and killed in the Legion. Well, Victor would come around once in a while to dinner with us. Mrs. Weeks used always to say to me: " Bring Victor around, he does me so much good. I like his laugh and the sound of his voice. When he comes in the room it always seems so much brighter." Well, that is the way it was here in the Escadrille.

For work in the Escadrille, Victor worked hard, always wanting to fly. And courage! he was too courageous, we all would beg him at times to slow up a little. We speak of him every day here, and we have said sincerely amongst ourselves many a time that Victor had more courage than all the rest of the Escadrille combined. He would attack the Germans always, no matter what the conditions or what the odds. The day he was wounded, four or five of the Escadrille had been out and come home at the regular hour. Well, Victor had attacked one machine and seriously crippled it, but the machine had succeeded in regaining the German lines. After that Victor would not come home with the rest but stayed looking for another machine. He found five machines inside our lines. None of us like to see a German machine within our lines, without attacking. So, although Victor was alone, he watched the five machines and finally one of them came lower and under him. He immediately dived on this one. Result was that the other dived on him. One of them was a Fokker, painted like the machine of the famous Captain Boelke and may have been him. This Fokker got the position on Victor, and it was a miracle that he was not killed

then. He placed bullet after bullet around Victor's head, badly damaging the machine, cutting parts of the command in two, and one bullet cutting his scalp, as you know. Well, Victor got away, and with one hand held the commands together where they had been cut and landed at Froids where we had friends in a French Escadrille. There he had dinner and his wound was dressed, and they repaired his machine a little. That afternoon he came flying back home with his head all bound up. Yet he thought nothing of it, only smiled and thought it an interesting event. He immediately wanted to continue his work as if nothing had happened. We tried to get him to go to a hospital, or to go to Paris for a short while and rest; but he said No. Then we said, "Well, you have got to take a rest, even if you stay here." The Captain told him that he would demand a new and better machine for him, and that he could rest while waiting for it to be ready, and then could see whether or not he should go back to flying. This was the 17th of June. The following morning Balsley was wounded. The same day or the day after, Uncle Willie came to see Victor and was with us a couple of days. Those first days Victor slept late, a privilege he had not taken before since being in the Escadrille, always having got up at daylight. In the daytime he would be with Uncle Willie, or at the field, seeing about his machine, or he would take his old machine and fly over to see Balsley. At first Balsley could not eat or drink anything. But after a few days he was allowed a little champagne and oranges. Well, as soon as Victor found that out, he arranged for champagne to be sent to Balsley, and would take oranges over to him. At least once a day, and sometimes twice, he would go over to see Balsley to cheer him up. And in the meantime he wouldn't ever let any-

one speak of his wound, as a wound, and was impatient for his new machine. On the 21st he got his machine and had it regulated. On the 22nd he regulated the Mitrailleuse, and the weather being too bad to fly over the lines, he flew it around here a little to get used to it. His head was still bandaged, but he said it was nothing. Late in the afternoon some German machines were signalled and he went up with the rest of us to look for them, but it was a false alarm. The following morning the weather was good, and he insisted on going out at the regular hour with the rest. There were no machines over the lines, so the *sorties* was uneventful. He came in, and at lunch fixed up a basket of oranges which he said he would take to Balsley. We went up to the field, and Captain Thenault, Prince and Lufberry got ready to go out and over the lines. Victor put the oranges in his machine and said that he would follow the others over the lines for a little trip and then go and land at the hospital. The Captain, Prince and Lufberry started first. On arriving at the lines they saw at first two German machines which they dived on. When they arrived in the midst of them, they found that two or three other German machines had arrived also. As the odds were against the three, they did not fight long, but immediately started back into our lines and without seeing Victor. When they came back we thought that Victor was at the hospital. But later in the afternoon a *pilote* of a Maurice Farman and his passenger sent in a report. The report was that they saw three Nieuports attack five German machines, that at this moment they saw a fourth Nieuport arriving with all speed who dived in the midst of the Germans, that two of the Germans dived towards their field and that the Nieuport fell through the air no longer controlled by the *pilote*.

In a fight it is practically impossible to tell what the other machines do, as everything happens so fast and all one can see is the beginning of a fight and then, in a few seconds, the end. That fourth Nieuport was Victor and, owing to the fact that the motor was going at full speed when the machine fell, I think that he was killed instantly.

He died the most glorious death, and at the most glorious time of life to die, especially for him with his ideals. I have never once regretted it for him, as I know he was willing and satisfied to give his life that way if it was necessary, and that he had no fear of death, and there is nothing to fear in death. It is for you, his father, relatives, myself, and for all who have known him, and all who would have known him, and for the world as a whole I regret his loss. Yet he is not dead, he lives forever in every place he has been, and in everyone who knew him and in the future generations little points of his character will be passed along. He is alive every day in this Escadrille and has a tremendous influence on all our actions. Even the *mécaniciens* do their work better and more conscientiously. And a number of times I have seen Victor's *mécanicien* standing (when there was no work to be done) and gazing off in the direction of where he last saw Victor leaving for the lines.

For promotions and decorations things move slowly in the army, and after it has passed through all the bureaus, it takes some time to get back to you. Victor was proposed for Sergeant and for the Croix de Guerre May 24th. This passed through all the bureaus and was signed by the General, but the papers did not arrive here until June 25th. However, Victor knew on the 23rd, that they had passed, and that it was only a question of a day or so. He had also been promised, after being wounded, the

Médaille Militaire which he would have received sometime in July. I wish that they could have sent that to you, for he had gained it, and they would have given it to him. But it is against the rules to give the *Médaille Militaire* unless everything has been signed before the *titulaire* is killed.

I must close now. You must not feel sorry, but must feel proud and happy.

KIFFIN ROCKWELL.

Légionnaire

THE LEGION

THE LEGION

Sept. 26, '14.

Dear Alce: Well, I am having a very amusing experience; but I don't know how long it will remain so, and when it will become dull. I joined the Volunteers Sunday night and was overcome with the kindly way everyone was treated. When I entered the Caserne the old soldiers (territorial reservists,) reprimanded me for saying " Monsieur " to them, and *tu'tuoi'd* in a very friendly manner. They showed me about and seemed to take an individual interest in each recruit.

The people I am thrown with are, for the moment, Polish in majority, for they are a crowd which came together from Cambrai. But they are of almost all nationalities and all stations and ages of life. I am most friendly with a little Spaniard from Malaga. He has been a newspaper reporter in London and got tired of doing nothing there, so he enlisted here. So far as I have seen I am the only American (the others having been sent to Rouen a day or two before I enlisted), but I have seen a couple of negroes. There are about thirty Alsatians, a few Russians and a few Belgians, one or two Germans, a Turk, and even a Chinaman arrived this morning. There are Greeks and Russian Jews, and probably many I have not noticed.

A typical Parisian Apache has taken a fancy to me. He is a naturalized Russian Jew, but got in as a foreigner because he served a turn in prison and did not want to be sent to Algiers. Though only twenty-

one he has bullet wounds in his arm and scars on his neck. I have been in this place three days so my experiences are wearing off a little and it begins to look natural. But last night I attended a very interesting argument, in which the German Socialists were condemned for their actions in the Reichstag. As an aside of the discussion a little Alsatian explained a probable cause for the atrocities of the German soldiers. He having done his service there said that the men were treated so harshly and the discipline was so strict that he used to hear them say: "In a war anyway we will have a good time and do what we like." The present crimes are a natural reaction from the German iron forms.

Rueilly Barracks.

Same date to his brother Conrad: The present Military Governor of Paris is said to be partial to us, therefore the first battalion got clothed and fitted out immediately. But now that the danger of the German army's attacking Paris is removed there seems no great rush to put us in the field. All the factories closed about the first of September and everybody was taken into the Legion who presented himself. Thus the Second and Third Battalions are made up of a very low physical and social class. I am glad to hear in the last two or three days that over one hundred of the first four Companies (first battalions), have been reformed or dismissed. What surprised me was the extreme kindliness with which we were treated, and the lack of severity in the drilling. For a couple of weeks the drill masters (*pompiers,* who engaged voluntarily), were much too kind and gentle for the average *Légionnaire.* But now they are stiffening up a little. The drilling began, of course, with marching in, and changing from one formation to another. The second day they gave us

rifles to drill with and by the second week we already had our *piou-piou* clothes, knapsacks, rifles, water bottles and bags, and, of course, the modern "Le Bel" rifles.

We took marches in the streets at the end of the first week, and ever since we have taken a march nearly every day,—now almost always to the *Bois de Vincennes.* We always march four abreast and re-form *à gauche en ligne* or *à droit en ligne,* two deep. Thus every section of eight men moves as a unit. Then there is *vers la gauche en ligne,* which means that all the units of eight, except the first, put themselves on a line with the first. From a double-line formation, or even from a column formation, we go into a single line a pace and a half apart, called *en tirailleur.* This is the fighting formation usually used, from which we shoot standing, kneeling and lying, and make advances under infantry fire. Against artillery fire we do the reverse. As a column marching we diminish the intervals (*serrer les intervals*) and crouch, thus sheltering ourselves as much as possible under our sacks in which are, of course, our bedding, dinner-cans, and cooking-pans,—all good armor against shrapnel.

At first we only did these exercises in the court-yard, but this week we have been doing them in the afternoon at the aeroplane field of Vincennes. On Wednesday we left the barracks with all our officers mounted (the first of four companies), and a bugle corps playing all the way to the fortifications.

Your loving
VICTOR.

A few days later he writes: The time flies in the Barracks. It is the routine life, I suppose. We not only have our uniforms but almost all our equipment, and there are rumors that we depart almost

any day, but I begin to doubt them. Paris is an extraordinary sight. I crossed the Place de la Concorde last week about 9:30. There were a few lights just to show the outline of the place and the statues, but in the sky four great search-lights played. One from the *garde meuble,* another in the distance beyond the Champs Elysees, another from the Eiffel Tower, and a fourth coming from the distance behind the Tuileries. The night was very clear, but there were thin shreds of cloud sprinkled over the heavens. The search-lights, though their rays were often invisible, especially the more distant ones, lit up the scraps of cloud which seemed to lie at different heights, so that one often saw three tiers of cloud-flakes illuminated. All the lights on the Seine or in its proximity are extinguished, so that it is like the city of the dead, except for the occasional reflection of the slowly moving search-light in the still water. I have been, this last week, getting *permission* and spending the nights at home, but I have had to return to the barracks at 5:45. There being no means of travel I used to walk, and it was the most pleasurable sensation of the day,—walking the banks of the Seine from the Pont Neuf to the Gare de Lyon just before sunrise. The changing cloud effects of shape and color were beautiful, as was Nôtre Dame as seen from the east with the old houses, the river and its bridges.

The newspapers here gave little news when Paris was in greatest danger, but one could tell by the sights in the town how things were going. The food was very bad here last week, as before, so I used to eat out for lunch on alternate days; and in the subway one always met refugees with bags and children who go out at the Lyon station. In a café one day I had a map and was discussing with Herédia, my little Spanish friend, the position of the troops. A

well-dressed little woman and her daughter came up and said quite simply, "We come from Creil. Our house is destroyed for military purposes. The Germans are at Compiègne. Pontoise is evacuated and the bridge broken. The *Avant poste* of the French is at Écouen." Écouen is almost a suburb of Paris. Most of this news I have since verified, but at the time we had no idea of where the Germans were, except by rumor. The German aeroplanes, you probably know, flew over us every day about two weeks ago. They dropped a few harmless bombs, and on the whole amused the population who used to gather in probable localities in crowds at about six in the afternoon to see them.

The first day I was at the Boulevard St. Germain changing my clothes, when I heard a sound like the beating of carpets, only sharper, and growing more frequent. Looking out I saw a Taube flying silently overhead, and the noise was made by people firing at it from the gardens and housetops with pistols, shotguns, or anything that came to hand.

The same afternoon one of them flew over the caserne, and the old territorials got their rifles and popped at it. Among the newly-arrived volunteers was a Chinaman. On hearing the firing and seeing the machine he turned quite pale and ran into the house, where he is said to have hidden under a bed. The next day an order was issued forbidding people from firing on German aeroplanes, as the damage, it was feared, from the bullets was greater than that the aeroplanes might inflict. Mr. Whitney Warren looked me up and I have been able to keep in touch with the doings of the outside world through him and Mr. Jaccaci, whom I see on his return from Bordeaux, or other distant points.

My best love to everyone. I think of America often, but I am enjoying this experience.

To his mother, undated: We changed garrison yesterday, after many false alarms. The change came at 5:30 yesterday morning and we got ourselves fully equipped, and sallied forth. The complete trappings are very heavy. The water bottle over one hip, a large bag for grub and odds and ends over the other on top of the bayonet, a box containing 84 cartridges across the chest, the rifle (weighs 10 lbs.) and the sack. The sack is about 18 inches square by 5, containing change of linen and personal effects (I bought a water-color box), on top of which are strapped an extra pair of heavy army shoes, and part of the squad field-accoutrement,—such as an ax, a pail or a shovel. I have the last named. Over all is the blanket with a piece of a tent-cloth rolled up and folded about. The sack itself sits at the height of the shoulders, the personal canteen, which is perched above all, is at about the level of the head. I thought I might get a chance to see Uncle Willy, so I got permission to take my bicycle. I had to push it all the way, and carry the sack as there was no room in the food wagons which followed us. We were in all only a battalion (4 companies), who left, but we had our full outlay of mounted officers, motor cycles, and wagon train of field kitchen, besides the corps of buglers. All the wagons are requisitioned. One still bears the title "Violet Parfumerie" and the horses are of all sorts. Only one captain has a horse worthy of the name. We halted every forty minutes for ten, and on account of traffic made an enormous detour, following the fortifications from near Vincennes to St. Cloud, where we crossed the Seine again and mounted the hill. The view was superb over the Bois,—a little misty, and filled with cattle and sheep in pens. I looked back as we descended the other side and enjoyed our winding column among the tilled fields,

with the many-colored little flags sticking from the guns, the blue "*couvre capet,*" and the tawny tent-covers mingling with the shining *gamelles.*

I must leave now. I have had no letter from any of you since you left England. Perhaps they got stopped at the Caserne. They say not. Anyway, Mr. Jaccaci will take them for me in the future.

I am flourishing. The new caserne is better than the last.

Rueil Caserne, October 6th, 1914.

Dear Papa: This life is very healthy if not too exciting. Since our walk from the Barracks of Rueilly we have not been over-worked. In fact this whole procedure is as though one picked up the first lot of men in a city street and had a continuous picnic with them. The worst part is that they are sometimes still treated too well, and instead of appreciating it they grumble that they should not be expected to run in the fields, or what a farce it is to try to make them dig a ditch while lying down. These walks and stops give one a splendid chance to view the country under all conditions, even though I scarcely ever have the leisure to sketch it. We often go out about 6:30 or 7 in the morning, and now the mists are rising and one has the faded yellow Autumn coloring. Our company has been shrinking automatically through reformed men, and Germans being sent to Africa, and others to special service, such as provision-department, etc., till we now number 190 instead of 250, and yet there are men *portés malades.*

I had the Spaniard, Herédia, changed into my squad so as to have a little more intellectual conversation. But he is so absent-minded that I sometimes get out of patience with him. Occasionally

one hears a bit of interesting conversation. A man comes in saying: "My wife heard today that her brother was killed August 15th.—News travels slowly." Then, instead of talking about the soup or the exercise, they make interesting remarks of personal knowledge. "Yes, my cousin was wounded at seven in the morning and he was not picked up till sunset." And similar statements which show wonderful inefficiency on the part of the field ambulances,—as, "There were only two *brancardiers* to a whole battalion of the 79th." The gossip is that these evils are being speedily remedied. In fact I see it. We have a *brancardier* to every squad (18 men) maximum instead of a battalion (1,000 men). It might be of interest to you to know the names of the men in my squad. Markus, better class Russian Pole with French wife; Herédia, Malaga Spanish, writes for Spanish papers and has translated Mark Twain, etc.; Held, Swiss origin, born in Paris; Gabai, Turkish Jew, Constantinople, Spanish ancestry, cheap chemisier; Millet, Italian from near Monaco; Zimmermann, Alsatian, Strassburg, professional bicyclist, served as orderly to officer in Germany, speaks French with a vile accent; Zudak, Russian Pole, very greedy, speaks considerable French; Chikechki, ditto, speaks better French, a strong fellow; Bogdan, Austrian Pole, no French but German; Canbrai, miner, simple man, never gives trouple; Bajteck, Austrian Pole, greedy. These Poles are by far the best material physically for soldiers; and though not very bright, they do not give trouble. Gabai, the Turk, is all the time talking and getting into most heated arguments whenever anyone will talk to him, in fact, his presence is always felt when he is in the room by his constant flow of language. Manchiuski, the slight little Pole tailor, calls him the *mitrailleuse*. Recently

Held got himself changed to the kitchen; the reason he gave me was that he could not stand the constant yelling and cursing.

Friday, October 9th.

I have just come in from a day's march and received my first letters from you through Mr. Jaccaci's messenger. We had heard rumors of this march and expected it to be difficult, but really it did not come up to my expectations. The whole Battalion left the barracks at 5:40 after a most disorderly rush to assemble, for the whistle blew half an hour ahead of time. We drank soup instead of coffee and carried with us coffee and cold meat, and each of us had a fagot of kindlings to heat the coffee. The rising mists on the Seine valley were very soft as they rolled over the poplars. Outside a town where we stopped some women came out and gave us coffee. Then we came to level lands, wholesale market-gardens, and the companies separated and tried to manœuvre without destroying the turnips, carrots and cabbages,—a very unsuccessful procedure. "*Les paysans gueulent comme des putois,*" said our Captain, and bringing us into a column of march we proceeded towards the fields where we were due to make coffee and "*repos.*"

Our first squad of *éclaireurs* having got lost, I was sent out to do advance sentry-work, that is, I with two others. We rambled across the cultivated potatoes ahead of the column, and picked up an apple or two besides eating some grapes. The midday rest was very delightful. Though we only cooked coffee it looked like a true bivouac. The Italians in the third company sang the Marseillaise and a number of Neapolitan songs, while some Russians in another group did fancy dancing. The march home was dusty, but not sufficiently long,

for we reached the barracks at 3:30. I hear we did about twenty-two kilometres.

I have not risen from the ranks yet, but my name and face are familiar to the sergeants and Captain, and I take the Corporal's place in my squad when he is absent. My stammering speech and embarrassed manner, however, detract somewhat from the advantages of having a pronounceable name and being a recognizable American.

I made a sentimental *faux-pas* at Rueilly Caserne one night. It was after taps but the lamp was still burning. I lay trying to sleep with my head to the middle of the room. In fact I was almost asleep. There was a call in the room. I afterwards learned that the unfortunate Germans were called to be sent to Morocco. Some one said, "*Ou est* Chapman?" and the next thing I knew some one embraced me. I thought it was some joke, and lifting my leg pushed him across the room. A voice whimpered "*Sans blague, c'est adieu.*" It was a poor fellow I had seen a few times, who though really French was born in Germany and had put his name down as German. Then he hurried off, but I was much touched by his kiss for I hardly knew him and never heard his name.

Rueil, Oct. 19th, 1914.

Dear Alce: I hope you have news before now. I shall get photographed for you this week. I arranged with a fellow to take some pictures of us on the march last week, but since we had the weekly march by companies, instead of the battalion together, the plan fell through. Besides two good marches in the woods and hills west of us—Marly-le-Roi, Etang-le-Ville and Forêt-de-Marly, and the usual Tir, there were two events which were of interest,—the burial of a French soldier and the arrival of the *Mitrailleuse* detachment.

A native of Rueil, wounded at the Front, died at his home and we, being the nearest garrison, did him military honors. With nine others and a Corporal I, by chance, was chosen to go in full field equipment and conduct the bier to the cemetery. The house being opposite the church we merely saluted as he was carried by. There were forty soldiers from the barracks in undress uniform (bayonet and cap) besides most of our higher officers. These all entered the church for the service, but we could not, though the priest requested it, on account of the separation of state and church. After the service we accompanied the hearse to the cemetery proceeded by a band, which of course, played the funeral march. It was very impressive, for the whole town turned out and followed up the narrow, crooked streets of the little town. I could not see the procession as I marched beside the hearse with my rifle-barrel pointing down—a most fatiguing position as I soon discovered.

Ever since I knew of the *mitrailleuse* squad I have tried to get into it. Also both Mr. Warren and Mr. Jaccaci advised me to. But the Lieutenant would not take me because I had had no previous experience. Well, I intrigued with the old Spaniard, and on arriving here Friday they found they needed more men and demanded them from all the companies. Herédia, my little Spaniard, also has been making efforts. Well, my Captain said he wanted his men, and when his hand was forced by the Commandant, he gave those who had a zero score at the range. Herédia was allowed to change because he had done very badly. Another effort was made for me through the request of the Sergeant of the *Mitrailleuse,* but the Captain knows my name and refused. So it rests. My Gromort companion, a young Russian, who joined and was immediately reformed on

account of a bad heart, has introduced me to a Russian friend, Solotaraff,—a Beaux-Arts graduate,—who is doing some work with MacMonnies,—a fountain in City Hall Square, and a monument at Princeton. He is in the third company and we are going to do water-colors together. In fact we did one at noon today. Blagly came out yesterday and we rambled about, and he told me his fanciful ideas, and kissed me on both cheeks at parting,—a most exuberant, affectionate nature he has, which bubbles through channels of most awful French. It would really have amused one to have listened to us chatter, for it was so much easier to talk than to try to understand the other that I noted more than once that we were chatting on to one another on different subjects at the same time.

Rueil Caserne, Poste de Garde,
Oct. 21, 1914.

Yesterday at eight in the morning there was a review of all the four Companies and impedimenta. The reserve rations were given out and stuffed in our sacks, the great *cartouchiers* hung round our necks, filled with eighty-eight cartridges each, and we were lined up, the bugle corps at the right and the wagon train behind. One of the Captain's horses behaved so badly that he dismounted. The deep-chested Commandant, with a long, square black beard, mounted on a gentle animal with a misfit neck and lanky hind quarters, gave the commands in an operatic voice. The Lieutenant-Colonel, old, drawn-faced, mounted on a furry-haired polo pony, stood beside him, while the Commandant's Aid, on a similar animal, ambled about on the steps of a neighboring building. Our ruddy-faced, lowering-eye-browed Captain—he always wears his medal

of a Volunteer of '70—sat, legs out-stretched on a mangy black nag. "*Presentex Armes!*" roared the Commandant. We did so, and the bugle corps struck up. Immediately the four docile-looking animals scampered off with their unwilling riders and it was not till the end of the trumpeting that they returned to their positions. What will happen when we use our rifles, or a battery of artillery happens to be near by? We filed off to our rooms and did nothing much the rest of the day. Today my squad is guard. We got up before the reveille and relieved the guard of the previous day. It consists, for the most part, in sitting in the small white-washed room and relieving the sentinels.

Three *Légionnaires* jumped the wall last Sunday night, so we now have to post a man at the far end of the enclosure and look after these fellows now in the prison, called *la boîte,* besides, of course, mounting guard at the door and saluting the passing officers. A better educated Pole is trying to make out an Italian newspaper, while a fat, beer-faced Milanese carpenter and an Austrian Polish miner are discussing the disadvantages of the stove, with a bearded Alsatian. The *Sergeant de jour* writes beside me. The Paymaster enters and stamps the letters with a rubber seal. (No stamps necessary for the *Militaires.*) "*Nom de Dieu! Le clairon n'est pas là. Le cochon,*" ejaculates the former. A couple of soldiers are reading with interest "*Lectures pour Tous*" of the year 1909. In the far end another sleeps with his knees up against the pile of mattresses. A white mongrel fox-terrier runs about. Without one hears a passing company at drill. "*Section Halte!*" "*En ligne face à gauche.*" If the Lieutenant-Colonel or anyone of higher rank appears, or a company passes the gates, there is the call "*Aux Armes!*" and everyone jumps to the gun-

rack, and fixing his bayonet to the muzzle, lines up and presents arms before the door.

I was in the sentry-box at noon-time, and contemplated the open square with half-clad horse-chestnut trees. A middle-aged woman asked to see Hirsch. He came. Then a girl arrived and asked for Hirsch *fils*. He was also sent for, and there were two little groups who chatted in a corner outside the gate. Father and son in the same battalion, but *soldats de deuxième classe* and neither the least soldier-like in appearance. I have guard from 6:30 to 8:30 and from 2:30 to 4:30.

November 2, 1914.

Dear Alce: I am sorry to read in your letters that you and Papa are most down-cast. I, from this side of the water, do not feel in the least miserable. Somehow everyone expects it to be a long war, though they do not say so. Mr. Warren told me in Paris, the middle of September, that with those big guns Antwerp was doomed. But the great mortars are only good against forts and towns, and must be reinforced by small guns to prevent capture, so that in a campaign they are of no advantage and a great impediment. The big engagement is now in progress about Dixmude, a final German effort to break in the eastern wing. The news is good but nothing decisive. The only result I would wish for is that the Germans should be driven out of France before the cold weather sets in.

As for me, if I had joined the fellows at Rouen I would be at the front; but this scum of Paris streets will take more months of preparation, if they ever can be made fit for the front. More rumors of leaving—within a week—to Manois, with cavalry and artillery at Camps de Mailly and long distance

rifle ranges; then, if we are not forgotten, to the Front. But the hardest, most desperate fighting, is nearly over; for even the maddened Germans cannot continue to be prodigal of their men, so these hecatombs must cease.

There is a distant rumor this noon that the Alsatians and Belgians will be separated; also the Poles and Italians put in regiments apart. I don't believe it. When people are idle they tell stories.

I never told you that I constantly use the alcohol lamp to cook with, since it all fits in my *gamelle,* so I can take it away to the next camp. I have the sewing materials and the bandages. From every side—Uncle Willy, Mr. Jaccaci, even Mme. Bristlé —they have given me things, more than I can use.

Love to Papa and Chanler.

Rueil, November 17, 1914.

Dear Alce: I am writing in a little *pâtisserie* such as one imagines on the French stage,—all white and very small. Round marble tables and a large account book with a little lady behind it and a potted evergreen—the very regular, stereotyped kind. Here I came with Herédia and Dessauer last night, and drank delicious chocolate. (Dessauer is with me tonight, reading Tristan and Isolde.) We smoked the wondrous cigars Mr. Bliss had given me; and Herédia, in his soft but halting French, told us of the people of Spain—their customs and their dances —till we forgot the outside world and only the strokes of the church clock told us it was eight. Except for our costumes, it was a most perfect evening of peace and repose. Well, here is where my martial spirit leads me. My discomforts are very small at the caserne now, for I have got the bed next the window which I open at night and close before it is noticed at the reveille. For the last couple

of days my reading has been divided between Hamlet and the Infantry Manual. I borrowed the former second or third hand from the owner; but lo! the half of the pages were uncut. I feel very blue about once in three days at doing so little. So far as the drudgery goes I am perfectly situated, for I do not do the chores (*corvées*) and have not the bother of reporting and swearing at people.

Rueil, November 27, 1914.

Dear Alce: . . . For the third time my fate was weighed in the balance about the *mitrailleuse*. It seemed that they were as anxious to have me as my Captain was to keep me. I was led up before the Commandant with the Captain sitting by and my name read out with four or five others. My Captain came over to me and asked me if I was not happy, and why did I want to go? I mumbled, hesitated and said I understood the *mitrailleuse* to be more exciting, etc. He did not like that; but I thought of a phrase that Uncle Willy suggested to me to say, "It is more dangerous." That was like a magic word: he could not refuse me now. He gave me to the Lieutenant with his blessing and relieved himself before the assembled officers in rich French phrases, as "If only all the men were like him!" "This is the best of my Company," etc. etc. Meanwhile I stood on one foot and looked at the floor, bashful as sweet sixteen. I have been made pointer which is the best position next *chef de pièce*.

Café de la Place, Laignéville (Oise),
November 30, 1914.

Dear Alce: The third evening of the march. At last a civilized house to sleep in! It is a dance-hall adjoining this café. We are now in country traversed by Germans, and passed through Creil on a pontoon bridge and saw twenty odd houses in ruins

—the result of German shells. Beginning Friday night, everybody gay with vim; and looking out on the moonlit parade ground we all heard "*La Dame Blanche*"—a bugle call to put lights out, and it appeared very beautiful when what we are used to hearing is the dinner call, "*Sergeant de Jour,*" etc.

We arrived at Écouen after a long and hungry journey at twilight, and looked up at the Chateau. After a long wait we were told to take the *pièces* and ammunition up to the Chateau, which we did by a winding route through gardens and passageways, up steps and along parapets. Unfortunately the quarters were very bad and we had to walk a kilometre and a half to get our grub. I thought we were, of course, worse off than the rest, since we are not attached permanently to any one of the three battalions nor have we been given a *cuisine roulante,* but it appears everyone fares equally badly. I spoke to a driver to-day: "I slept in the wagon, and the horses *sous les belles étoiles.*"

Well, yesterday we marched only a short distance; but it was perhaps just as tiring because of stops of uncertain duration. We were billeted this time in a typical, dirty farm. The ranks in the yard, and ourselves in the barn. Plenty of straw, but we didn't arrive till twilight again and left at dawn (seven), and since everything was very inflammable, only one candle lantern for the fifty-nine *bons hommes.* You can imagine the comforts.

All about me now they are writing post-cards for those of us who neither read nor write. They are having a good deal of fun out of them. "*Nous ne sommes pas maintenant si loin de la ligne de feu, mais c'est moins chaud que votre cœur.*" Two others are discussing how a third's name is spelt, the last being quite ignorant. Matter finally settled by consulting a Sergeant's list. From now on we are going to

fetch our *vivres* raw and cook them ourselves. Since the Italians are good cooks I expect it will be good. I must rush off to pack up my bag, since we leave early in the morning. Passing through Chantilly, General Joffre was said to have been about to review us, but he never showed up, though a professor-like-looking General regarded us.

Your loving
Victor.

December 1, 1914.

Dear Alce: Twenty-eight kilometres now, at St. Juste. We heard cannon twice today. The country changed on leaving Clermont and became slightly rolling plains. It rained most of the day but a slight drizzle of the morning suddenly became a heavy rain at the hour of the Grande Halte. *"Il faut se débrouiller,"* you can bet, to *"débattre les mulets"* besides being *avant garde,* (i. e. putting the guns in position), then make our café and warm up some beans we had cooked the night before. Well, of course we had to *abattre* the mules before the water boiled, the fire having gone out twice; but our section having missed our coffee two days on end for the same reason, left the *gamelle* on the fire and did drink the coffee although no time to strain it. The *boite de linge* was given out and eaten with the rest, so we marched on happily, singing *"La Guerre est déclarée"* and so impressed the Colonel, that he is putting us at the tête to-morrow. Our Sergeant went ahead and got us another *salle de danse.* We have had to fight to get straw, but I rather think we have enough at last. It's odd; we were exceedingly well received at the last place;—"Will you have some more straw?" etc. We cooked our soup in the court, but all the smoke blew up into the room.

We all are in the best of health—barring a ser-

geant with the colors—but the three battalions are almost half laid up, I fear, for they carry their sacks, and you can imagine what even the most modest can scrape together in three months' waiting, to take as necessities to the *tranchées*. It is sad seeing them fall, and being gathered up in requisitioned dump-carts at the tail of each battalion.

I am too sleepy for description, but from what I see of trenches now, the modern warfare tries to imitate nature. Imitation manure-piles and hay or straw stacks are all over. We leave tomorrow at eight for Montdidier, only seventeen kilometres. Neither St. Juste nor Alost suffered from German occupation.

December 3rd, 1914.

Dear Papa: Well, the authorities seem to be hustling us, unfit though we be, to some *tranchées,* where we shall probably remain till the Allies besiege Berlin. We have been marching six days now, alternating a thirty kilometres march with one about seventeen. It is really remarkable how little of the war one sees even here within about ten kilometres of the enemy. We are now in a *petit Patelin* which, of course, was visited by the Germans, and absolutely deserted by the inhabitants at the time. Half the people have come back; but many here now are not natives and we are warned against them as being spies. No signs of occupation, except a broken door here and there and notices in red and white chalk where officers were quartered. Aside from the discomfort of sleeping in tramps' rests, standing about for orders, and doing without regular meals I rather enjoy the *ballade* (marching song) and the changing landscape.

One would almost have thought we had been brought on purpose by ways where few signs of

warfare existed. I know from eye-witnesses as near as Soissons and Senlis the marks of war, but one felt much nearer the war back at Chantilly with soldiers and generals sauntering about. I even saw a picturesque Cossack officer. Gray auto-vans with *Ravitaillement de 2me Échelon* and the like on them. At Creil we saw a dozen wrecked houses; but one gets no better impression by being on the scene than by looking at the post-cards strung up in the Boulevards at Paris. Of course one sees Territorials everywhere, but not in any greater numbers than about the *Banlieue de Paris*. Now and then we see a Red Cross auto come by. Yesterday we saw several freight trains made over into Red Cross, and had a talk with wounded out of the window of a Hospital of contagious diseases at the long wait before entering Montdidier.

All of the people who have visited the front speak of the endless lines of troops hours before getting to their destination. Well, there is nothing of this sort where we have been. Beard dirty Territorials at railroad crossings and *gendarmeries*. Today is the first time we have seen the Active. At Pierrefonds there were some Artillery. Horses and men housed in straw shelters which resembled the negro huts at the Jardin d'Acclimatation. A few gun carriages at the edge of the woods hidden by turf. Yesterday a Taube was visible at the horizon and those with glasses claimed to see puffs of smoke (shells) about it.

I am writing in a small café, filthy and full of soldiers, smoke but little else. Nothing to be had in the village to eat; no chocolate, cheese, tobacco or matches. The old woman threatens to close up because men kick at white wine being sold at *vingt deux sous le litre,* eight and nine being the usual price.

It is a small but picturesque village, a little torchon

(*torchis*) and woodwork but next to no stone. Very picturesque with its steeples, gables, crooked streets and horse ponds,—but heavy with mud and no street-lights. We saw today for the first time the Paris motor busses, now provision wagons. Love to all.

Your loving
Victor.

Dec. 9—near Caix.

Dear Alce: We have been having a most healthy and harmless existence. We are (first and third battalion and *mitrail*) living in the hamlet surrounding a tumbled down eighteenth century brick chateau. A bedraggled old woman appears before the side-door and asks the *légionnaires* not to chase the chickens and please to wash the steps. A controversy rages as to whether she is the Marquise or the house-keeper, but the odds lie now in favor of the former opinion.

No stone in the country side to speak of, so every building here is either built of red brick or of *torchis*, the peaks or gables of which are picturesquely steepled and the tile roofs green with moss. We hear the distant roll of cannon almost all day long, but so low and soft, like the distant rumbling of thunder, that unless there is some one to nudge one, it is scarcely perceptible.

Two days running, yesterday and the preceding, we went to the east of Caix where the zigzag line of trenches diagonals off to the first line, some six kilometres off. There the double roll of the *soixante quinzes* was remarkably distinct. It was a flat undulating plain, little patches of trees in the background and a steeple or chimney silhouetted in the far distance. The trenches were, of course, unoccupied, but except for roofing in parts—ready.

Moncour, 28 Kilometres east of Amiens.

The week of walking was followed by a week in the little feudal village. I got the colic at Mazières (It's not the one you see on the map.)—all the *mitrail* did, from eating bad beans; so we entered the hamlet rather down-cast. Picardie is very flat; but still the land rolls a little, and in the hollows are jolly primitive villages. For two days we were warned that we might leave any minute: then last night the order came that we were to depart at 2:30 A. M.

It poured all yesterday and last evening, so you can imagine we went to sleep in our hole of chaff and straw behind the mules with no great relish for the coming tramp. Well, we were routed out at 1:30, gathered up our muskets, bayonets, etc., and rushed into the fray to load the mules. My *kepi* lost in the straw as usual. Great strife among the *militaires,* two being drunk, and having remained in the straw. (We " touched " our pay, ten sous, yesterday. How a man gets drunk on that I don't see, yet they manage to.) The rain had stopped. A waning moon peeped out from time to time,—fuzzy, as with hoar frost in the mist. We started, after a wait of course, between the first and third battalions on a very muddy road. Half the time we walked in single file to avoid the deep mud along flat stretches of country, almost no trees, from time to time a long faint flash of cannon on the horizon, and twice or thrice the flash of great search-lights. We smoked and talked and watched the bobbing ears of the patient mules. I chatted most of the time with Rader, on Canada, the Pacific, and flying. I forgot to tell you that Rader is an American aviator, who got shifted as a common soldier, although he is well known, and applied as aviator. Naturally he was very bored to learn *demitour droite.* I found him four days ago and by great fortune and a little pressure had him

brought into my *pièce* of the *mitrailleuse*. He has earned his way since seventeen, but I find it difficult to teach him French. After traversing a village with a small church perched on the side hill, saw a few artillery sentinels with their floppy soft hats. (Heredia says they are a Basque costume hat.) We had a long wait outside this town and entered it by broad daylight. I am writing now in a little cottage,—two rooms, kitchen-dining-room, and bed-room. In the living room where I am is the usual upright loom, half wood, half steel, the little stove and coffee-pot and an old woman who relates the German invasion, and the battle of the 44th of the line against them (on the hill to the east). The battle on the hill is graphically described, while the little daughter mends my torn blue overalls and a boy of six, with a large stomach, eats sugared bread. The German Corporal who lodged (here) a day and spoke French said he had been in Paris, and explained that France had started the war. He rummaged in their effects but they had the good fortune to escape pillage. The uncared for French wounded were found in the fields nearly a week after. The enormous number of troops that poured toward Paris the day after the battle, and the flying return of the remnant, a few days later—all this, and the quaint drawl, from a slight provincial accent, make the theatre of the war here more real to me than before. Rumor varies as to our stay here. The *mitrailleuses* are to be separated sooner or later to join a Grenoble regiment, so I shall see more of Frenchmen. On account of the nearness of going under fire and my inexperience, I am to start as *aide-chargeur* of the *pièce* (much less dangerous, if you want to know) and work my way up. Love to Papa, Conrad and Chanler.

Your loving,
VICTOR.

Monday Dec. 21, 1914.
(Postmarked Bray)

Dear Papa: I am staying in this little town for the second time. Its aspect is not the same as when we arrived with our mules a week ago. Imagine a dozen or twenty houses on both sides of a road. On the southwest, directly behind, rises the grassy plateau abruptly, while on the other a long double row of poplars borders a canal. In time of peace it must have been a typical village of the country side, house, barn, stables and shed forming a square, round a dirty courtyard and repeated half a dozen times. On one side of the road a new brick church with a central tower. A small factory or two, I should judge. Across the bridge of the canal the resplendent house of the Mayor which though only of one storey, has a slate roof instead of the picturesque tile, a garden in front, and a corrugated tin barn behind. On my arrival guns boomed in the distance. The muddy street was paved with a narrow, crooked sidewalk, cluttered with the bricks of ruined houses. Empty gables yawned at the sky as did barns with rafters stripped of tiles. I wandered to a wall punctured with balls in search of *affiches*. All were tattered and almost unrecognizable; but no! an official *communiqué* dated August 23rd announcing French successes in Lorraine and Haute Alsace. A rude but formidable barricade of bricks and timbers barred the view in front of the church, its formal belfry marred with a great gash below the spire. I wondered why the bomb-hole was on the western side. Surely it was not the work of a French gun. Beyond the barricade, not ten yards, green barn doors swinging from the ruined basement of a factory. Ahead the way wound around a curve and the irregular firecracker pop of German steel bullets told the direction of the enemy. The Mayor's house near where we

stopped is a forlorn ruin now. Its fine slate roof most mangy from a bomb. Before it is the garden; under a rude signboard rests a Prussian Lieutenant born in '92. Behind a bomb has burst, scarring most ruthlessly the *papier-mâché* imitation brick side walls, and giving to the tin barn a sieve-like appearance. I walked up the street yesterday and asked about the steeple. There was a German machine there till the '75 dislodged it, and that covered ditch was dug by Germans while under fire from the barricade. It seemed incredible, it was so near. We did not spend the night at Eclusier; but under cover of darkness marched, *mitrailleuse* on shoulder, to Frise, four kilometres under the German fire. The journey was too fatiguing to enjoy the sounds of balls and lightning-like flashes of distant artillery. We marched in single file, in silence, with all our traps, and cartridge boxes besides (three hundred each). No lights in any houses, though behind the boarded windows sometimes a sound of voices. Arrived at a barn we fell down in some rank hay and tried to sleep on the spot where we lay, not a match lighted to show the space. It rained and water fell on us. The French trenches we thought must be very near—almost at hand. We heard the crack so distinctly sometimes,—little knowing that that was the sound of German steel-clothed ball striking beside us. The morning showed a desolate courtyard, a barn or so with half the timbers gone, the farmhouse vaunting a stump of chimney and the floor of the second storey, tile roof here and there still remaining. A couple of carts, one heavy, with grass sprouting on it; the other light, and put out of commission by having its shafts and spokes cut. Through the back window of the low shed, we peeked up the hill. Three lines of French trenches surmounted by the German on the crest. The cook had gone up to the kitchen of the 30th some

houses up the street. He needed wood: there were two gaps open to fire, but otherwise no danger. I went with the *aide cuisinier*. An ample courtyard with a pump, a snug farmhouse on the right, and beyond a manure-pile, a large shed. A group of soldiers smoking, sleepily watching blackened *gamelles* piled on bricks in the base of a great fireplace. Red-bearded all of them, and speaking an odd French.

Tent-covers and *capotes* drying and being cleaned of mud. Returning to the door from that picturesque but very smoky room, I looked upon the yard. Four or five chickens in the corner listlessly scratching. The roof of the shed had only half of its tiles in place. It must have been in range of some vital point, for "tick," a brick would fall, and then a small rafter-end dropped down. A great black turkey with a white mate coquetted animatedly across the further end, oblivious of risk. I wondered, how odd that they still lived uneaten by the soldiery. "Tick!" above me, and a slate fell from the roof. A soldier lolling at the door looked up as he saw a brick of the chimney next dislodged. I returned for more wood to a *barraque*, but being called off by Kohn to another errand I sent Rader, who took Samuel, a little English Jew, as companion. The story he told me later is more exciting. He walked across the five yards of open space, looking to the right of the hill. "So those are the German tren——" "Sing-g-g-," and something tapped the stone before his feet. He made a leap for cover, then looked back. Samuel had tried to hasten too fast and had fallen headlong in the mud. A Sergeant of the 30th (served the campaign in Alsace, sergeant here three months) came out sauntering and "Whap!"—a bullet caught him in the behind, slitting his nice red pantaloons. The regular method of communication we soon found was by means of

boyaux or ditches, which traverse the gardens, skirt the lanes and hedges and connecting brick walls. They were most disagreeable, on account of the amount of water in their lower levels; but still we were advised to use them. Going to and from the trenches with boards we used to stop at a cottage window, and an old woman would serve us cider from a pewter litre measure. "*Va t'en de cette porte!*" a *camarade* would yell. An innocent-looking door in a brick wall—but examination showed a dozen freshly splintered holes. As we drank, "pling-g-g!"—the window sash rattled and the territorial drying his feet by the fire said on glancing up—that the brick wall was struck. "My husband," said the wizened-faced little old woman with a gray handkerchief tied under her chin, "was shot as he stood in the doorway there," and she pointed to the side of the room whence had just come the bullet-ring. But this almost continuous shooting is of little avail on account of the elaborate system of *boyaux* on all the roads near the front, between Frise and Eclusier. There is a continuous one cut six feet deep in the chalk rock. The territorials work on it by night. To go to the trenches there are, of course, many *boyaux,* but the soil is very muddy and the heavy traffic and rain have bad effects. I got careless the other day and took a forsaken one as a short cut. My tent-cover under my arm, containing the alcohol lamp and bottle, encumbered me. "Pop!" the alcohol bottle exploded, torn in two by a bullet. Arrived at the trenches I took off my coat and found a wound in the skin of the biceps on my right arm. The first wounded *mitrail!* Nothing severe, as you see I write without difficulty. By the way, this paper is from some official book in the Mayor's house. I am very independent now. Theoretically

homme de liaison between the mules —— at Lapidel and the *Mitrail* at Frise. I cook my food on a stove in the Mayor's stable, wander up to Frise with wine, go up to see my *confrères* in the trenches and write to you "Merry Xmas."

Your loving,
VICTOR.

December 26, 1914.

Dear Uncle Willy: Xmas in the trenches was interesting but not too exciting. Beginning the eve before, "conversations" in the form of calls. "Boches," "*ça va*" etc. In response: "*Bon camarade,*" "cigarettes," "*nous boirons champagne à Paris,*" etc. Christmas morning a Russian up the line who spoke good German, wished them the greetings of the season, to which the Boches responded that instead of nice wishes they would be very grateful to the French if the latter buried their compatriot who had lain before their trenches for the last two months. The Russian walked out to see if it were so, returned to the line, got a French officer and a truce was established. The burying funeral performed, a German Colonel distributed cigars and cigarettes and another German officer took a picture of the group. We, of course, were one half-mile down the line so did not see the ceremony though our Lieutenant attended. No shooting was interchanged all day, and last night absolute stillness, though we were warned to be on the alert. This morning, Nedime, a picturesque childish Turk, began again standing on the trenches and yelling at the opposite side. Vesconsoledose, a cautious Portuguese, warned him not to expose himself so, and since he spoke German made a few remarks showing his head. He turned to get down and—fell! a bullet having entered the back of his skull: groans, a puddle of blood.

Dec. 29, 1914.

Dear Mr. Jaccaci: It is very quiet in the trenches since Christmas. We have orders not to shoot, and the Germans only send over about a dozen an hour to let us know their presence. If it was not for the rainy weather the life here would be at least bearable, but as it is, wetness combined with filth make a hard combination to be cheerful against. Our section, after two weeks of sleeping beside their picks, have at last got to a shelter to live and sleep in; but it is far too shallow, barely over three feet, and just room enough for all the men to lie in, provided they begin at the corner and range along head to feet like sardines. I would have kicked for more depth, but I was at *Eclusier,* the half-way station for our provisions, for four days, while my arm got attended to. You see I got a stray bullet through the biceps coming up the *boyau,* so there was no use (in) my staying up in the trenches till I was fit again, in case of attack. Oh, Herédia got a scalp wound on the 23rd. Very insignificant, we thought, but the infirmary shipped him off with other wounded and I had only seen him once, and given him the papers you sent me, never suspecting that he would be shipped along in the middle of the night.

Jan. 15, 1915.

In another letter to Jaccaci, Victor describes the attempted rescue of a wounded comrade in a turnip field.

. . . We were creeping towards one another and his long brown beard seemed to grow out of the ground. I crawled over him and, after another eight yards, reached a pile of two sacks and a body below. There was no one to say *" Baisse-toi! "* but the object before me was enough to keep my head down. Peytic

came after me and, on my suggestion, brought a shovel. I pulled off the sacks. It was Samuel, a little English Israelite drafted to us from Toulouse, his bearded face prone in a pool of blood. Twenty feet away the *boyaux* deepened and I saw the heads and shoulders of two or three spectators. Peytic crawled over me, passed on towards the dead and we decided to pull towards the three men. He was to pull the corpse while I pushed. He turned on his haunches, the better to pull, and his *képi* flies off—a piece of the skull with it. On to the body of Samuel he falls. I conferred with Ames, who was behind me. No means of getting them out from our side; so, having seen with our own eyes that the *brancardier* was unmistakably finished, we returned to a deeper part of the passage where our sergeant ordered us back to our *mitrailleuse,* as " in case of attack " there was nobody to man the guns.

Meanwhile Kohn and his companion came to the *boyaux* from the direction of the 30th, and, under the direction of Jacobs, their Corporal, got the bodies away with a rope.

Don't let this story I tell you allow imagination to float that I live with balls whistling before my nose, eat with companions who lose their lives while collecting firewood, etc. If the trenches are well made and one has a reasonable sense of proportion as to what is dangerous and what is not, one is as safe as in Broadway.

January 14, 1915.

Dear Uncle Willy: A thousand thanks for the packages. They arrived the day before yesterday and are the fulfillment of my wildest dreams of luxury. For the state of filth I live in here is unbelievable, and the barest necessities are luxuries. I get down to the depot and kitchen about every two days

for a face wash. Our heads get crusted with mud,—eyes and hair literally gluey with it. We of the second section have been living up in the trenches where the clay and top soil mix and form a slime which does not filter through the chalky rock lying below. Ames and I have finished our shelter out of our spare hours when not *corvée de soupe*, or *corvée de charbon*, or taking our turn at the digging of the *boyaux*.

Well I over-worked and got dysentery; and finally I decided that I was over-doing this "*bonne volonté*" of always being on hand when there were big beams to be carried up for the new shelter. So I asked for a rest and have been taking life easy for two days. My section is to be given a new place in the 30th. Better so far as position, range, etc., but we have to begin all over again making shelters for the *pièces* and ourselves. Luckily the earth is better to work in here. After the third foot you strike chalky stone which gets hard at four feet; so that the bottom of the ditch, about six feet, is pretty hard work. The most disagreeable part is the constant falling over of the top, or *talus* where the diggings are thrown. The continual rain loosens the earth and down it comes. A little at a time sometimes, or where the sentinels have made scoops to lie in, whole blocks. Then the German bullets whistle and the frightened *Légionnaires* cringe. (The fire always goes out after a page and a half. Then I step on the paper as I relight the fire, which means mud.)

I have run across several South Americans—fine specimens—good shots, generous, who crossed the ocean since the declaration to fight. And they are not afraid of risking their skin. One I know is going out tonight between the trenches to try to catch a Boche. We had Bavarians before us; but we don't know who they are now. I talked to an American who went out on a fool's errand to entice a German

out last night without success. A Russian was to play wounded and ask help: the innocent supposition being that kind-hearted enemies would come out. They had not even begun groaning when the Germans sent up rockets and chased the couple with "*Moulin à café*" (maxim guns). (Rodger, *le jeune, né gaston de Mont Martre,* seems to have been a Jack at many trades. He just now interrupts me to tell how he learned to milk in the north, near Belgium: and when he left, the guns had already been there four days.) Kohn has been off with Garcia Calderòn (an interesting Peruvian who is started at the Beaux Arts), making plans of the trenches in the vicinity of Frise. I would have gone but I was down with the fever. They climbed the steeple which lost its top last week, and made several amusing geometrical calculations yesterday afternoon.

To return to your gifts: the fancy waistcoat is almost part of me. I never take it off. The periscope I tried to make but could not owing to lack of good glass. And the flash-light,—well, I dare not use it all I need for fear of finishing the batteries. The Schieffelin soup cubes came in very well, as I had knocked off the *gamelle* for a rest. If you can find more things of the sort later I should like them.

Your affectionate nephew,

VICTOR.

January 20, 1915.

To the same: Your periscope is the envy of everyone. Not even the surveying officer of the 30th has one half as good. The cape and sleeping-bag you gave me is a wonder. I used it all last night digging the new *abri* for the *mitrailleuses* in the rain above the trenches. The ideal soldier now-a-days is a *terrassier* or subway digger. I would like a sweater and a pair of socks; but you sent the latter, you say.

A good pair of boots if it is not too difficult, 29—3 or 4, is the soldier's number. I wore 10 D in America, but larger of course, now.

Jan. 27th, 1915.

To the same: Superb candies and most welcome magazines. They are the joy of the whole section. But I have no letters from you. We (Kohn, Ames and myself), had a few pleasant hours in our private cabin with our stove and books and eatables. But before we had made ourselves really happy we had to throw everything in sacks and move down to the cave of the 30th near where we have built new *abris des pièces*. The Germans have been dropping shells near us, with no result, the last two days. I would like some whisky, and, if you can sneak it, a pocket camera.

January 27, 1915.

(Postcard)

Living again more or less like cattle and working nights. First sunny day in January it seems to me. With the sun things are looking up this morning, but it is simply appalling how hard it is to have time unobstructed to oneself. Eat, sleep, and warm wet feet is one's first preoccupation when not working with pick and carrying huge logs. Our salvation here is an abandoned phosphate factory, where we go at night for coal and bags, rails, etc.

VICTOR CHAPMAN.

January 30th, 1915.

Dear Alce: I just received your letter with Papa's: and two days ago I had Papa's with Mr. Jusserand's. The last week has been one of toil; but we are reaping rest and leisure now. We moved the two *pièces* from the muddy burrows on the top of the hill to

slightly level ground in the bosom of the 30th. Here we built heavy shelter for each of the *pièces*. I, as pointer, with Kohn, the Corporal, live with our *pièce* where I am now writing.

Well, from my point of view the situation is almost ideal, for instead of being in a hole in the ground with only earth, sky, and rotten beet-tops, I look out of the door across the parapet right over the marshy basin to the bluffs and Germans on the other side. On my right nestles in violets and pinks the little village of Frise with its steeple chopped off near the top (knocked down about the first week in January), a few dark evergreens and barns. But, look here, I don't write these letters to a large and admiring public. I don't consider them good enough or the right kind of thing. They are just what I think will interest you.

The *abri* I am living in resembles more than anything of the log-cabin of the pioneer. The usual way of making the shelter here is to dig a hole the size you want, put beams across the top, then plank, and finally lots of earth. Well, the ground here is very crumbly, so Jacob (Pawtucket-Belgian-butcher), conceived the brilliant idea of making the hole larger and putting a wall of sacks filled with earth on which to lay the stress of the roof. Our blessing, as perhaps I told you, is a factory in the swamp where we go by night and get charcoal sacks, boards, even iron-ware. The depth of the house is unfortunately regulated by the height of the *mitrailleuse* which has to stand up so that its barrel sweeps clear of the ground. Towards the enemy is a narrow window smaller on the outside. This we keep filled with loose sacks of earth. The roof is made up of first, continuous rows of logs, which from inside gives the backwoods character, on top of which flat rocks, then earth, then the most difficult and necessary article,

corrugated tin, finally earth masking the whole. The weapon stands in the middle and an improvised bed on each side,—three or four boards and sacks stuffed with straw. At best, of course, it is a pig-pen with the clutter of everything from *boîtes de confiture* and newspapers, to *passes-montagnes* and *peaux-de-moutons*. And when these things get mixed with the everlasting mud which our shoes bring in every time it rains or snows (slush), you can judge for yourself. My great joy, though vexation occasionally, is Kohn. Though of such a lovable and child-like innocence of character, he is a softy from having been always pampered. His learning is immense. I picked up a New York Times last night,—article by G. B. Shaw. So I casually asked Kohn, who was entirely between the sack curtains, what kind of Socialist was Shaw? "A Fabianist," and with that he gave me an account of the growth of Socialism in England, how it influenced the continents,—the briefest kind of a sketch of the points of divergence between Socialism and Anarchism. Well, I was numbed by slumber soon and had to beg him to leave off till I was in a more receptive mood. And Political Economy is not his line, for he says mathematics is his specialty. With that he is of an artistic temperament, almost mystic, in his way of doing things. Herédia used to say that Kohn did the rude physical work as though he was performing a religious rite: in fact, with such devotion and zeal that he soon wore himself down and became more subject than any of us to the *cliché* we all suffered from.

For the past two weeks we have had with us off and on,—see him twice or more every couple of days,—the charming Peruvian, Garcia-Calderòn. Well, yesterday he came, weeping nearly, saying that his blamed family had got him changed into the First

Aero,—a great honor. He departed for Paris, so if he does go through he said he would look up Uncle Willy and Mr. Jaccaci.

The trouble is with this life I find myself using up all my time as if I was back at Rokeby making the pigeon-house. One goes down into the valley and forages for boards, window-panes and small beams. The unfortunate inhabitants have at last been sent away, so we can buy no more chickens, geese, etc. At night, for Frise is right under the nose of the enemies' guns, we go to get coal for our stoves. The evacuated houses have yielded up a quantity of this. Pillows and feather-beds are at a premium,—I consider these a little unhealthy.

The most boring procedure in the calm life is when there is an *alerte*. Now we know by experience that these *alertes* are bluffs. There are three kinds: attack on Albert predicted, that the French are blowing up Péronne,—or (and this is the worst), general German advance, because of the Kaiser's birthday, or the anniversary of some German victory. We have to stay up all night, all of us, and the sentinels are doubled everywhere. Yours and Papa's letters are a wonderful delight to me. I read and re-read them. Love to Conrad and Chanler.

Your loving,
VICTOR.

February 1, 1915.

Dear Uncle Willy: Your letter and a parcel containing: one sweater, one pair boots, three pairs socks, two bottles paregoric pills, one tooth brush, one tooth paste, two pkgs. tobacco and one pair spectacles came to-night. So far I have received everything you mention except the forehead protector. The cape sleeping-bag is fine. I put a little straw in the bottom and use it either for a comforter

or as a bag. I really feel I have what I need, and I do not want to encumber myself with more stuff; for it only increases the likelihood of its being lost.

My *capote* still holds together, and the government has given out more trousers. I have one heavy suit of underwear and two light ones; so I wear the two light ones while the heavy are being washed. Preston Ames had a coat and trousers of leather sent from Paris. They resist the mud and wear, but don't know that they are worth the trouble. What do you know about that waterproof black leather? Is it as lasting and convenient as it looks?

Ames is the son of a man who came from Baltimore. His father was an engineer. The former was the black sheep of the family; but finally, on a bet, took up dentistry and later married a Uruguayan. This fellow has relations in Washington. Some kind of kidnapping story got out in the papers when he was taken from his American Aunt. We are now resting on our laurels. Second Section mount guard at night and do the chores. I live with Kohn in a shelter said to be bomb proof. Two beds and the *pièce* between, with its barrel in a *créneau* temporarily stuffed with earth-bags. The Germans must know there is something here for they tap, tap, tap on the parapet now every morning. Oh! the Boches dropped some nice shells for our special benefit this afternoon,—knocked down the *talu* before our large *abri*. Do send a baby-camera. Trouble be damned. I see a doctor has one. I enclose jolly letters from Papa.

Affectionately,

VICTOR.

February 2.

After-thoughts, morning after: Mounted guard, or was *homme de traction,* from two to four. Not so arduous a task as it sounds. After saying "Howdy"

to sentinel of 30th, go to make the fire in the main *abri,* and take opportunity of making myself toast, set water to boil, and read Aunt Elizabeth's letter to you. They seem to think I am dead already. Why, so long as I don't show myself, and "*Baisse toi,* Chapman!" in the shallow trenches, nothing but the small mischance of a *marmite* falling on me can do me harm. And one has time to duck from these German shells. They travel slower than sound and wait before exploding. Made myself a couple of cups of Russian tea (Kohn just got some) and slipped back to my bunk a little past four after waking the next man.

February 8, 1915.

Dear Mr. Jaccaci: . . . Ah, the boots you sent! I refrained from mentioning it before. What a newly-discovered toy! I greased those boots. I took a tallow candle and melted it into the cracks. Then the thought occurred to me: "Why not try them?" Nonsense, waste of time—I can see it has the right mark. But curiosity overcame me and I tried. Well, with enormous effort I could enter my foot, but I immediately wanted to take it out again. I conferred with Platin, who sells shoe machinery. He said in that form I should take size 30. So I am sending you back the shoes; they say it can be done, and would you change them for a larger pair.

But to speak of our excursion yesterday. With a huge leather bag, a periscope, a telemetre, and a pair of field glasses—not forgetting five metres of string,—we sallied forth. To the north, in Section D, we examined a tunnel leading towards the Boches. We peeped over the *talus* at the brown earthworks—the distance is scarcely thirty metres at that point. Waves of earth, bushes behind and here and there a waft of smoke. Round a turn a little further the

Germans were dropping hand bombs. Luckily the present *Légion* is habituated. They stood about too much in groups and repeated *sale Boche* as they carelessly regarded the shifting smoke of the last grenade. One clapped right over the *talu* from Kohn and me—so close that the dirt of the falling fell on us. Well, the shock is not so much the noise as the tremble of the air, and the danger, I judge, insignificant, unless it fell right on you, and even then you can get away if there is any place to hide.

We walked into the fields behind the trenches and took distances and observations till we came to a wood, and then we did see what their trenches looked like. It was curious to observe two brown lines, with a thin strip of green between them, and people shovelling from both. Little puffs of smoke rising from both—and they were at war, one with the other. We found an "observation" and a little insignificant-looking "75" hidden in the wood. One would never think it could send such roaring shells.

Night fell. We stopped at ——, had some coffee and cheese and downed an egg, and returned home by the canal in obscurity. Thanks very much for the chocolate.

Yours,

VICTOR.

February 10, 1915.

Dear Papa: The boring part of this life is that it is only ideal for a boy of fifteen. Constructing houses without boards; camping out with its hardships and difficulties to be overcome; generally living a happy-go-lucky, hand-to-mouth existence; losing things right and left, if they are abundant;—I have lost, I fear, almost entirely my perspective of the outside world. Now, therefore, it becomes more difficult for me to describe what goes on with color and interest.

The tap, tap of Boches' bullets on the face of my *abri* in the evening affects me about as much as the lap, lap of little waves against the side of my sail boat. When out walking, *corvée de charbon,* one expects to hear the mi—eu (descending the scale) of spent bullets and the pistol crack of others. The rumble of distant artillery passes unnoticed, and but mild curiosity is aroused by the chug-chug-chug of a machine gun as of a steam-motor boat rounding a bend. The bursting of shells near by, of course, attracts comment,—more because it varies the monotony than anything else. The wiseacres argue long and earnestly as to whether it was a *cent* or a *cent-cinq* that fell at such a place. Any bearded reservist monotonously mounting guard (a couple of *cache-nez* and a peaked rubber thing about his head and neck, giving him the appearance of an old woman), will tell right away if the rumble over there is *soixante quinze* (French) or *soixante-dix sept* (German), or larger pieces, with shrewd guesses. The shells that fall on top of us do, to be sure, cause almost a sensation, not of danger so much as the fact that there is something happening. A distant explosion, a low whistle growing stronger and louder, a flash, a blob of cotton-wool smoke growing quickly larger and thinner, a roar as of an emancipated genie, and the wind wafts away the rest.

It's all newspaper reporters' machinations about shells screaming like women. The amusing ones are the small pieces, like 75, for their bullets travel faster than sound. One hears a pr-r-r-r- pung-g! And some black smoke floats off in front of the *talu.* I grab a periscope and wait for the next. Pr-r-r,—out of the earthworks opposite with the little fringe of scrubby bushes against the horizon there appears a brown-black asterisk,—a small Aurora Borealis. A sound or shock follows and that is all.

Life in the Legion

But in this existence where every plaster wall you pass is scarred with bullets, every barn door seems to have the trade-mark, even of the board I am writing on which was carried from Eclusier, I found yesterday was punctured,—amid all these signs one is as safe as in any other walk of life. These whistling balls can be compared to microbes in the air. There are thousands, but if the proper precautions are taken one is no more imperiled than from small-pox or pneumonia. The danger was when we first arrived. No one knew the lay of the land, where it was suicidal and where not. But now everyone knows the ropes.

About ten days ago a young fellow (Class 14) of the 30th stuck his head over the trenches to see the effects of a " 75 " and was killed (ball through the head). Well, it was such an uncommon occurrence that the whole Battalion of the 30th was unnerved. The bearded veterans,—who had seen their comrades fall mangled at their sides and marched onward through burning villages,—*they* stood round in groups at corners of the *boyaux,* and I met a cortège of them carrying the corpse, with such an air of sorrow and solemnity that it hit me a dozen yards away. In the *Légion* where people are more careless, though we have never seen a battle, even an encounter, they stow them away the way they bury the entrails of a cow. It's perhaps the topic of a few hours, such as the dropping grenades in section D.

As for improving my character, etc., one vegetates here to the degree of putrefaction. The first three weeks we lived under awful privations, so that all vestiges of civilization dropped from us. Washing never, change of clothes rare, once a week if lucky, undress never, except to change. It was forbidden, mind you, to sleep with one's shoes off. (We all do it now, for B—— found a deserted store in Frise and brought us back sabots.) When we did get settled

down and got a time and place to wash, everybody did it about three times and then, being so accustomed to live otherwise, they forgot about it soon. No regular hours means that nothing gets done properly, we often eat lunch at two and supper at nearly eight. Of course some one mounts guard every two hours all night, nevertheless we drink coffee leisurely at 9:30 and toast our bread before the grate.

Everybody advised me not to take money with me as I should have no use for it. But it is the saving of our existence here. On this plan of life the first joy is that of eating, and now we are finding new channels for buying edibles all the time. Cheese, jam, butter, tobacco, wine from Cappy,—and from the fields we pick vegetables by night; also the peasants have chickens, calves, goats and pigs, which we buy. Jacob is a wonder. We had roast pork yesterday, and this morning, head-cheese. The day before, veal. Jacob's manner of preparing those left-over parts of the animal makes them more delicious than the usual parts. I am sure he has educated more than half Rhode Island as to how to live. He told me how he revolutionized the butchers in Poccasset.

Drop a line to Welch, will you please, to deposit $500.00 in Morgan, Harjes for me, for my letter of credit has expired. I still have enough, but everyone else's has given out. We have a few pets now in the shape of two goats and four small rabbits. Their destiny is unknown. I received your Homeric poems: they remind me of Hotel de la Poste, Rouen, where I read them first. Your Deutschland Uber Alles has not arrived.

February 20, 1915.

Dear Uncle Willy: I have been very much cut up the last three days by the death of Kohn. He was shot beside us in front of our *abri* while taking ob-

servations with field glasses of hills to the northeast. *Un mauvais hasard.* The Germans must have a new post of observation which takes this trench *enfilade.* Michel, a Texas negro, who came over for the war, was shot through the head a little farther up the line yesterday. Poor fellow! He had demanded to be put with the Senegalese because there was not enough fighting here. Kohn is a much greater loss to the Section than most people realize, for he had the brain of Pascal. Though only a Corporal, he advised the Lieutenant in many important questions and was, day before yesterday,—one might say,—intriguing with the Commandant of the Section, to get the *mitrailleuse* sections transferred *en bloc* into the 30th. He was, as his name shows, of Jewish descent; but not of any confessed religion himself. His wife, a French Argentine, is Catholic. Herédia has not yet returned, so I am thrown with Ames. We, the *Mitrailleuse,* hang together pretty well and are loyal to our chief. . . .

Yours affectionately,

VICTOR.

February 25, 1915.

Dear Uncle Willy: Thank you again and again for the parcels. Two came last night. The camera!—now I shall use it! But four days too late to photograph my dear companion Kohn. It is hard, in fact I sometimes can't yet believe he was shot. I must quickly take pictures of my remaining friends. I am sorry I have not as yet satisfied you as to the things I have received. I did get the flash light, but never received the breastplate or forehead protector. Thank you ever so much for the tobacco. (American, I suppose.) I had practically stopped smoking because of the difficulty of making the French tobacco burn, and because of its strong, bitter taste; but now

I have mixed the two and with a little rum to flavor, I am happy as a chimney. But above all, those letters from home were a pleasure! All about Hester's wedding,—wonderful! wonderful! . . .

Your affectionate nephew,

VICTOR.

P. S. Oh, I forgot to tell you the two remaining peasants were evacuated from Frise, and we inherited, as it were, a cow and six calves. Jacob made the deal: so we have milk now and shall eat veal.

March 4, 1915.

Dear Papa: Your letters come here often, but please don't be worried about me. We live a peaceful life here now. Very little friction because there is very little to do, as in the course of the last two months we have rested ourselves up, *tout à fait bien.* I mourn the loss of my Corporal, Kohn as my intellectual companion; but otherwise I am really very free and well-treated,—do what I want, in reason.

Oh, the Paris newspapers in journalistic style are making a *réclame* to find out what troops have been in the trenches the longest. One Regiment was 110 days; but it stated later that they had been relieved every four days. So some enterprising fellow is sending in our names since we have been here unrelieved since the eleventh of December, I think. Hence, I may become famous even as a worthless *poilu.*

Jacob, who always has an eye out for the main chance, got very friendly with the three civilians, peasants, who were left to guard houses here. Antoine, from whom we bought pigs, Achille, who tended the cows, and Abraham, his friend. Jacob had asked early in their acquaintance, whether Achille could sell him any wine or spirits. With a

sad face the latter replied he had only cider and that sour. Well, about a month ago Jacob went every day for milk. He found Achille and Antoine quite tipsy, and they offered to sell him four bottles—they only had five—at 2fr. 50 apiece. A very tall price, thought Jacob, but he would bring some prospective buyers to taste it on the following day. Next afternoon Platine and Jacob and Rodger (to carry a pig we were getting), and I went to taste the wine. Achille opened a bottle for us to taste which we rapidly drank. We argued a little, but finally took four bottles, being careful not to allow him to pass off on us one small one. Then, to celebrate the bargain, we drank another. On our way to get the pig we noticed a patch of freshly turned earth in the garden back of the farm. Jacob put two and two together and that night sent Rodger and Bianchi to look in the hole. (The peasants are not allowed to go out after dark.) They found nothing; but the next night Jacob went and brought back six or seven bottles. The moral Jacob draws is "no crime to steal from a thief."

The Germans have been mining in our old position. This morning they met the French who were also mining. They claim one German, but they left a man in the hole. The Captain of 1st Company and Commandant come up and stand about discussing what ought to be done. Of course the first thing the Germans did was to set off a mine. An Adjutant got badly hurt; but the other officers were only well-smashed with ground. Now we are on tenter-hooks lest they try an attack. I just went to supper, some one came rushing in—"*Alerte!*" and helter skelter we mount our *pièces!* It was nothing but a few Germans shooting at a *fusé* (rocket.)

Uncle Willy sent me a steel cuirasse guaranteed proof against bullets at 5 yards. I stuck it up beside

my cabin and immediately *crash!* snap! snap! Three good holes ripped in it. I should think the merchant who puts that on the market should be prosecuted. Think of the hundreds and thousands of poor wives who may buy that worthless tin and send it by mail to their husbands.

The Post. Best love to all.

Your loving,

VICTOR.

March 8, 1915.

Dear Papa: Still here in the trenches! Nothing has changed in our position since Christmas, I might say. We vegetate and vegetate. Minor incidents occur around us. The French, or rather the *Légionnaires,* who were mining, ran into the Germans who were doing the same. I think I told you. The day after making a couple more tunnels we had the good sense to blow them up before the Germans set off theirs. Hence we have been four or five in the *abri alerte* all afternoon. The French guns appear to have silenced the bothersome Boches' battery which used to drop *marmites* on Cappy, the town in our rear where the mules of the *mitrailleuse* are, and where our Regiment and a couple of others go to *repos.* My friends in the Companies told me it was startling how well informed the Germans were.

A week ago Sunday the band was due to play at three o'clock; at 3:15 the first piece was scarcely finished—zizz, boom! Every one rushed for the cellars! Next morning our General of Brigade was to have a review at 10 o'clock. Every battalion turned out in its best and was lined up in the street. (I think there is only one.) Immediately shells began falling. Uncle Willy's last parting blessing to me was a letter in which he told me to write Norman Prince at Pau, where he is getting up an American aviation.

I don't know what will come of it. Probably there will be more trouble than I am worth to get me out of here. I can, of course, stick to this job to the bitter end. From the point of view of the soldier (who looks after comfort) and not being *embêté,* I am *tout à fait bien* here,—on splendid terms with everyone practically, exempt from service,—for though no one says it, the *nouveaux* who have come to fill out our vacancies do most of the necessary chores,—and very comfortably installed. (My mind seems to run on this theme. I suspect I wrote you before.)

The characters here and the scenery are my principal interests. I shall describe the men of our Section to you beginning with the more picturesque characters. There was Nedim, Nedim Bey, a Turk,—a black heavy-faced Turk, and a typical Asiatic. He always wore two *passes-montagnes,* one pulled down round his chin so that his grizzled unkempt beard and nose protruded through. I believe he had been sent by the Turkish Government to study, and had worked in the French cannon factories. At any rate the Lieutenant had a high admiration for him which no one could understand. His French was wonderful! The article did not exist, but he was fond of the preposition *de;* as, *mon de pain.* He got permission at both places to build a separate hole for himself. After working night and day till it was finished he would light a roaring fire and sleep in an atmosphere warm enough to boil an egg. At the other position he had a dug-out about five feet long by two high, with a grate fire at the end of it. And he slept with his head against the fireplace! His love for fire resulted in his burning ends and patches of all of his clothes, and about his *abri* were always strewn pieces of burnt sacks.

I recall up at that dire hole, our first *abri,* one day no water for the coffee! But the *sceau* had been

monté. Inquiry showed that Nedim had taken *seulement un quart* to put out a fire in his damned *abri!* He was most renowned for his having a rather wanton showy rashness, and for the quantity of cartridges he burnt. Being the pet dog of the Lieutenant, he got all the cartridges he wanted from the 30th, from the infirmary, etc. Whenever an officer would pass, he would burn a few. Of a night he shot often as many as 150. "*Il va être cité à l'order du jour à force de tirer sur la lune,*" it was whispered. He made an indestructible *créneau* from which he pumped shot. Inevitably the Germans soon located it and the other day he was hit in the head and evacuated.

Next comes Cluny, our little Portuguese sea-Captain. Dark, weather-beaten, steel-eyeglasses and a soft moustache. His French also is admirable. He spouts away most interestingly about ships and the sea, but it is difficult to follow for every third word is Portuguese. My, how he loves his coffee! He has a mania for how it shall be made. He goes up in the air and thinks the world's agin 'im, very easily. He hates eels for instance, and was so disgusted when he saw some the other day in our reunion *abri* that he threw his *gamelle* over the *talu.* He has inherited Nedim's last *abri* and the first thing he did was to cut a hole in the sack earth-wall to let out the gases from the stove. His stories of the sea are most absorbing: for he has crossed the ocean as captain of a sailing ship.

Post.

Your loving,

VICTOR.

March 13, 1915.

Dear Mr. Jaccaci: Yesterday afternoon the Germans set off a mine before our trenches—a slight

earthquake, followed by a great eruption of earth and continuing like a geyser for what appeared some time. Then clouds of smoke and the falling of chunks of earth. As you may imagine, a first class *alerte* followed and we remained on the *qui vive* all night. This morning, bombardment of heavy artillery of the trenches opposite, to pay them back for the large bombs they dropped on our trenches during the night. Now all is quiet again and one hears the happy skylarks overhead in the mist.

Your copy of Papa's book came last night, and I read—what luxury!—through the night watches. Papa sent me a copy, he said, long ago, but it has never come. My only regret is that Kohn was not here to enjoy it with me, for he must have known those demented professors, all at least by reputation, for he studied five years in Berlin at gymnasiums, etc.

Uncle Willie's last letter spoke of a Norman Prince, who was getting up an American Aero Corps at Pau, and told me to write him. This I did. What do you hear about it? I would feel like an *embusqué* if the *mitrailleuse* company returns on the firing line, but I doubt it.

Keep your health and feed the children well for me. My regards to Bliss.

Your affectionate,
VICTOR CHAPMAN.

March 14, 1915.
Cabin of Mitraille.

Dear Papa: As I remember, my last letter was one gloomy groan. I must have had a stomach-ache. We are very happy up here now because everyone does his duty, things run smoothly and there is very little scolding. The Germans blew up a big mine farther up the hill from us. A shock, a fountain or geyser of earth accompanied by low growling, then

clouds of smoke and the patter, patter of falling *débris*. A real *alerte* we had, you may be sure; but the Boches saw they had *raté* the *coup,* having only blown up the ground in front of the trenches, and did not attack. We stayed an hour and a half behind the half-open *créneau* in the late afternoon, hearing not as much as a musket crack; only the skylarks singing.

Yesterday the French provoked the German batteries with a few heavy guns. The latter took vengeance on us and we had the most heavy bombardment that I have so far experienced. Tremendous waste of ammunition and quite harmless. After they had tired of sprinkling the trenches and the surroundings here, they concentrated on Frise. From our *boyaux* we enjoyed the spectacle. They did their best to burn the whole place down,—queer shells which exploded like rockets and sent off trailing fuses. They did succeed in starting a fire the other side of Cunal in Antoine's farm (where we bought the pigs), and a couple of buildings burnt brightly all night.

I am happy to say that, in this trench warfare, we, the *mitraille,* for our amusement, are getting the best of the Germans opposite. Up to now they, having the higher and better situation, have dominated our trenches with their *créneaux,* and demolished all the *créneaux* the 30th or the *Légion* have put in. We have by means of cast iron pipes (gutter drains from Frise), arrived at a simple and efficient system of smashing theirs all to pieces now. Having well located the direction of a certain hostile *créneau* by day we put in the pipe opposite at night. The other end is scarcely visible through the *talu.* Then systematically we empty cartridges into it till the wooden support is cut and the hole plugged with stones. The principal feature is that the only spot

from which you can be attacked is the *créneau* you are already shooting into, and their favorite resort of cross fire is ineffective. In the last three days we have destroyed the 19 *créneaux* opposite.

Ames just came in from his guard in the height of spirits. Three or four of them had given a few *feu de salve* and the Germans, getting nervous, sent up a rocket. The moment it burst he shot it, thus extinguishing it. The Germans do have a certain sense of humor though. They have a stick with straw on the end which they wave behind the *créneau,* now up and down, now sideways.

March 15.

I continue to run across amusing characters. A Bedouin who ran away from his native land because he killed the chief. He travelled all through north Africa and paid his way because he could read the Koran, and is here because a French officer saved his life when he had the small-pox; whereupon he swore to serve France in her next war. Ames talks Spanish to him; he knows very little French. There is a very powerful Catalonian called Ligio who is famous for doing what he damn pleases and sends the Lieutenant to hell when he is reprimanded. All his friends pray that he won't be passed to the *conseil de guerre,* but in the meantime he is cock of the roost in his section. There is a Roman painter named Pergola who ran away from Rome because he so dreaded the military service. They say he has talent, and he certainly seems to be a man of ideals and hard work. I found mounting guard beside my *abri,* a typical Russian Jew type,—large, hooked nose, black hair and beard, small eyes, but not lean,—fat and well-favored, like a Berkshire hog. An artist he said he was, but since he seemed to consider the landscape chill and dirty in color, I wondered. He is one of

those creatures of Paul Poiret who concocts those decorations and color complications which yell like cayenne pepper.

I got a copy of your Deutschland Uber Alles from Jaccaci. Capital! I had seen one or two of those fool remarks, but not by any means the greater part. I hope it sells, for it shows up their craziness so wonderfully well. I have been reading my Galsworthy again,—a collection of English verse by a Frenchman, bad as a selection of verse, but still interesting, a short story by Alfred de Vigny, and your Homeric Scenes.

Strange and violent ends some of the books of Frise have come to. Outside our cabin door I found, for cleaning the *gamelles,* the pages of the Swiss Family Robinson in French; while yesterday, before another cabin, I found pages of Quentin Durward, also in French. British authors are not the only sufferers, however. The third volume, yet intact, except the back cover, of the Meditations of St. Ignatius is placed over the stove for lighting pipes. Tell Alce that the only thing which keeps me from going out dark nights into the Boche trenches is that I know it would pain her if I got needlessly *zigué.*

Your loving
VICTOR.

Trenches, Frise,
March 17, 1915.

Dear Conrad: I hear from Papa that you now write poems to the Tortoise almost daily! It does not follow, however, that you can criticise my spelling or punctuation, for I am a privileged character. I am sitting outside my cabin with all my bedclothes, etc., "*marché aux guenilles*" on the *talu* around me. In the valley before me the German balls re-echo like breaking waves along a rocky coast. Now and then

the roll of a distant cannon swells up. But yesterday it was different. Ames and I, sleeping late after our night watches, both felt our cabin shake, and jumping to our feet at the same moment we cleared the deck for action and opened the half-stuffed *créneau*. Almost all the morning an intermittent but severe bombardment. Rumors came in fast of a mine explosion in Section D. This time it appeared the Germans really had done damage. The trenches were evacuated. A Spanish Sergeant saw one of his men knocked unconscious over the *talu,* calmly got up with a pick-axe, dug him out and pushed him into the trench. Unfortunately just as he was stepping back a ball went through his head. There were something like twenty-five wounded and five killed from that mine. The *mitrailleuse* up in that section, they say, will be *porté à l'ordre du jour* because it did not run away. A friend of Ames, an Argentine, came over for the war, was killed by a shell. So Ames went down to see about burying him. Though a most sluggish, undemonstrative person he came back much impressed with the *poste-de-secours* atmosphere. A score of wounded and dying but no corpses. Then he noticed a doctor come out of a little cave in the side-hill back of the house, and through the door he saw his friend with half a dozen others. Out in the little cemetery he saw a man gaping vacantly at the tombs. When spoken to all he answered was: "How did I escape? How did I? How did I?" The more I see in this war the more impressed I am that horse sense and calm are very rare qualities. A little later I undressed a man I found running up and down the *boyaux* shouting *"So moru."* (Portuguese, I believe.) A wall made of earth-bags had leaked a bullet through, which got him in the chest well below the heart. Very painful indeed, I am sure, but a man does not run about when he is dying. You can see by

my attitude and manner of talking that I also am getting calm and unfeeling to this harrowing side of the game. One has to "take them (the horrors) lightly" for otherwise the life would be an unbearable nightmare.

The upshot of yesterday's activity was that the *Légion* was relieved at three o'clock this morning and the 30th has replaced them in the whole section. (A. B. C. and D.) What will happen to them I don't know. We, the *mitraille,* hope to be attached to the 30th, but of course the Colonel of the 3me *Regiment de Marche de l'Étranger* wants to keep us. It is a very pleasant sensation, now that the buds are out and there are signs of spring, to be waked by our friends of the passing battalion. A happy visit which brings home the fact one already knows of the change of men. While I write the fellow beside me looks at a soldier beside the canal who hides behind a tree from German bullets. Drss-ss-ss Chung! A bomb. And we have just been shoved into the *abri.* Latest news has it the fellow is wounded in the leg. Some one has gone to help him.

Your loving
VICTOR.

P. S. I did have a bullet go through my arm. But I would not know it now, save for the scar.

[The articles referred to at the close of the following letter appeared in newspapers all over the United States, and gave Victor's parents great satisfaction. They were high-colored, journalistic sketches, in which Victor invariably appeared as the hero, the rescuer, the resourceful stage person. They had about them that false glare of literature which the public loves, and which the soldier hates; and I used to forward them to Victor in order to annoy him.

He could not be expected to understand that the glamor, limelight and bad taste in them were the conventions of a certain kind of newspaper work.—EDITOR.]

En repos, April 12, 1915.

Dear Papa: I have been puzzled lately as to whether you were sailing or not; but a postal from Jaccaci seems to confirm the idea that you are. I ask myself time and again whether I am still doing all I can here and getting out of it the uttermost. Also whether I would be better elsewhere. I am very tempted to catch at any straw to put myself in a position where I can do more than vegetate and make myself proficient in the wily art of breaking the rules without being caught as a school boy. But then I think of my allegiance to my Captain and to my comrades, my Sergeant and my Corporal. They have all been very fair to me. And how I lately cursed ——— as *embusqués.* "Am I also trying to be the same?" I think! It's only natural that one should be more intellectually bored and fatigued *en repos* than in the trenches where one is filling at least a potential function. "In case of attack" one would be of use. I suppose, perhaps, what I crave is intercourse. It takes two to enjoy the scene, to study the character of the soldiers, etc., not so much the first day or the second, but the hundred and second. Very egotistic to go on talking about myself, but it's an outlet. I go and see Farnsworth daily and catch myself making estimates as to how he keeps up his interest. But then he is more self-sufficient and self-satisfied;—besides he does have Sokona to talk to. Perhaps I did not mention that Farnsworth came up with the re-inforcements along in February. I met him as an undergraduate at Harvard (in '12). Beans by inheritance but a wan-

derer by choice. I must say I come back feeling gayer after seeing him. Perhaps after all I am always doomed to be unhappy for I have the insight not to be content with things as they are and lack the necessary force, or push, to make them otherwise. I rather excuse myself in this case a little, since army people, juniors especially, "know it all." You must take my letters with a pinch of salt, as I think I remarked to Mr. Jaccaci, for I generally write in a melancholy mood. If I feel gay I look up companions, buy a rabbit, get wine, and have a peasant-wife make a meal. The only rule that I constantly run a-foul of here is that everyone is forbidden to leave his cantonment, i. e. barn-yard and manure pit—till five in the morning. Unfortunately, on account of my size I am easily recognizable and the Captain has caught me now twice. He is lenient enough and does not like to punish, so he has let me off.

Your enclosures of Rader's articles have come. I should not have thought that such whoppers would be printed east of the Mississippi, save perhaps in a Hearst sheet. There are seeds of truth in some of his remarks, at least I can see where he had the idea; but I have to give him the credit of the most powerful imagination. From the first night in Frise we noticed that he was considerable of a *froussard*. And the week following he proved to be an unprecedented "*tireur-au-queue*." He developed one sickness after another to get out of the trenches. Finally got evacuated to get a bath on account of lice (no one had them) and, at Moncourt, by pretending he was English, got shipped to London. During the whole of the time he stayed at the Front his sojourn in the trenches proper could never have exceeded fifteen to twenty days. His only talent was that of making caricatures, which he did well, and a manner of getting what he wanted which demands admiration,

considering he neither talked much French nor could understand it beyond the simplest phrases.

I have just received your book of Essays. The title smacks of Arnold Bennett and somehow suggests that you are enjoying a ripe old age. But I do enjoy the contents. I just glow in the warmth and luxury of reading it. The Times is all I have as literature else. I have found a fellow who is binding it for me. Our "*cossack*" Rodger, who kept the cows for us at Frise, calls himself *relieur*.

It was amusing to see the different effects which Rader's articles produced on our little society. Lacasagne cast melancholy despairing smiles—he knew he was a *froussard* and a fearful shirker; and to add to these a desperate liar, makes him out a pretty bad character. But H——, the Dutch Jew, went into ecstasies at the cleverness and "nerve" of the man, and immediately borrowed paper and pencil from me and wrote a most windy description to an Amsterdam paper, as an *hors-d'œuvre* of what he could do if they asked him.

April 16.

We have been having reviews and marches. An intimate inspection by General Castelnau (Commander of the 2nd Army, I think).

Your loving
VICTOR.

[In the Spring of 1915 Victor's parents and Mrs. William Astor Chanler made a trip to France. They obtained permission to go to Amiens, and Victor, who was in the trenches near by, was on May 8 given twenty-four hours' furlough. It was a picturesque and happy day, and in the course of it the photograph of Victor as *Légionnaire* was taken. We were to see him once again; for a few weeks later the French Government in honor of the 4th of July, and

at the request of Ambassador Sharp, gave the American volunteers in the Legion forty-eight hours' furlough to visit Paris.—EDITOR.]

Cantonment under tent-covers in garden of village of ——

Dear Alce: The foregoing slip was written during the exercise this morning in a charming wood with the leaves just popping out, and the early blossoms and ground flowers out. There is not much of any sign to indicate that we are not to stop here for some time. The Captains and Commandants get furloughs of four or five days for Paris. The buglers go out in the neighborhood and practice the barrack calls. The Captains disturb us with reviews of effects, and the *fournisseurs* are busy giving us new light blue *capotes,* etc. I rather think we were moved from the last town of Hangest because there was a great lack of water there. Now we usually do marches and exercises in the early morning because it has suddenly become quite hot. In the afternoon theory, *nettoyage,* or *repos.* I usually get a chance to go in swimming. François would not take Fahnsworth because the latter was in prison (for the same offense as Ames and myself *i. e.* late at *appel*). We are not over much plagued by *rassemblements,* drills, etc., but I am naturally somewhat bored at the thought that we may never see fire again. Even Fahnsworth is getting bored at the outlook of remaining here with reviews, exercise, *alertes,* and the like. Oh, I do want to ask you one very sad errand yet,—I know you or Papa will do it so well, so much better than anyone else. It is to see and say a comforting word to Mme. Kohn, 1 *rue des Etangs, Charmont.* Perhaps she has moved, or my last letter gone astray since I have not heard from her.

Everyone is asleep about me in our improvised

summer tent, only the puppy is chewing some one's shoes and in the courtyard I hear a soft harmonica. It is a hot noon day. A true war dog this, born in the trenches where his father was killed by a shell. He (Dompierre) and his two sisters, Frise and Cappy, traveled here in the *musettes* of kindly soldiers, while his mother marched in front with the 7th Company. Now he is with us, but mother and sisters stay with the 7th.

Your loving
VICTOR.

April 15, 1915.

The French battery opened up suddenly while I was on guard 12 to 2 last night, and poured in about sixty shells behind the German lines, on the *ravitaillement,* perhaps. The echo and the shells travelling overhead sounded like a train moving away swiftly in the Hudson tube. The Germans finally, like a sleeping man waking and saying: " O Hell, I suppose I must," sent a long shell in answer. This afternoon, however, a battery opened up from a new direction and fired random shots at various points in our line. A poor chap in the First Section was killed, another couple wounded, quite far from where I am.

Your loving
VICTOR.

May 10, 1915.

Dear Papa: The day has passed uneventfully enough. Everybody shook hands with me all around as though I had been off for a month. I felt quite the most popular man in all France! My dear *" cabbo,"* Prosper Bianchi, a delightful, smiling Italian Swiss, who is ideally sympathetic, was so touched with the thought that you might go home without a souvenir of the war, that he wants you to have the little bomb

which he got in the trenches of Dompierre. It has never gone off. He stole it and we took out all the explosives, so don't be afraid. I have never coveted anything so much in my life, and doubtless would have swiped it from him if any occasion had offered. Bianchi thinks he will get another, but to me it is a rare article. Particularly since it is in perfect condition and did fall in our neighborhood. For about a week they dropped half a dozen a night. With the enclosed mandate you should have no trouble in getting it at the given address. It is the house of a relation of our cook, Trena. Please don't give it away or show it to anybody who might requisition it for the military authority, and if you take it to pieces look out for a little ball like a shot, or a ball bearing.

Rheims, southeast of Mondidier.
May 11.

We got up at 3:30 and packed everything. No particular rows. I stuffed the books and things into a *St. Goban* bag and put it on the *caisson.* Unfortunately it came near the wheel, wore through, and all the books fell out. A little Italian leading a sick horse behind, picked them up as they fell, so most of them are saved. A pretty walk it was. We skirted Mondidier and saw the sky to the east flecked with the white puffs of French shrapnel. In the halt this side of Mondidier, the aeroplanes circled round us like doves, and one white biplane did dips and upside down slides.

We were very inhospitably received here. Almost had to fight our way to a dirty barn-yard. Water is scarce, but now the *cabarets* have opened and wine can be had. We are leaving this evening for Bas, the rumor has it, and we are even prepared to sleep in the trenches.

Trenches near Bas,
May 12, 1915.

Dear Alce: Toward evening we left the little town where I posted the letter to you, and coming to the next village found it full of troops: it is their places that we are taking. A long walk through a dark wood, taking the *pièces* on our shoulders at the end, and a mile of *boyaux* to our position. Very clean and well-arranged the *Tirailleurs* left it. We had hoped on seeing a few exploding shells that it might be an interesting section, but all the troops we asked said they lived in comfort and ease. German trenches from 400 to 900 metres away. One fellow of the active said his regiment, which had been here for six months, had lost but twelve men; while our Arab guides told me in fifty-four days here they had lost but two. Amusing characters these fellows the guides; give orders half in French, half in native, and, for convenience, the men have numbers. "*Rassemblez-vous. Ou est-il cinquante trois? Colly colly* ——!" Well, this is so dead everyone walks about behind the trenches in daylight. They would do it before the trenches; but for the interminable tangles of barbed wire and *défense de tirer.* I presume the Germans have the same. There is a *château* and chapel in ruins. Here comes the *soupe.* Please send me my compass and be on the lookout for a convenient wrist-watch, I lost mine in Frise. I am very thankful for the books. Much love to Papa and Aunt Beatrice.

Your loving
VICTOR.

May 14, 1915.

Dear Alce: Well, yesterday afternoon when we were enjoying the quietude of these almost unreal trenches a put—put—crik-crik—crrrrrrr with harsh

accompaniment of cannon, and a lively *fusillade* broke upon our left. Our batteries thundered and the Germans returned by sending a few *shrapnel* north of us. We hustled round and got in position. It appeared the French were anxious to know whether the Germans still had their artillery opposite. The companies had received the news beforehand and were prepared: a few men at the *créneaux* and the rest in the *abris*. The Commandant ordered everyone out of the *boyaux:* one killed and two wounded. After twenty minutes the shooting lessened and we turned to other things. I to reading Lamb whom I found tedious till I hit the Dissertation on Roast Pig. Bianchi to continuing the elaborate process of shaving, so abruptly cut short.

The Company went out before the trenches again last night a little before dark and chopped away amid the beets. Three Germans came across the road to see what was up; but one tripped and attracted attention, whereupon both sides ran away, our men being quite unarmed. A curious effect these trenches give when seen from the normal ground-level and not six feet under. Irregular hummocks of turned earth, zigzag moles of brown soil, and in between rows of beet roots with green grass luxuriantly sprouting in spots. The whole seems to have no depth at all, like a plan of a maze on a piece of paper. The country here is very flat; but the monotony is relieved by woods, clumps of trees, patches of bushes, and a handsome double row of trees which border the high road running between the lines. Apple trees are now in bloom, and when the nights are not too windy birds chirp all through them. I have not yet, however, heard anything to resemble my conception of a nightingale's voice. Last night, after the disturbing influence of the artillery, both sides sent up occasional rockets. Short flickering stars which

rose, bobbed a moment, and went out, showing up only the black silhouette of trees and feathery clouds banked upon one another. Did I tell you that in my night watches I have taken particular interest in the stars?—like the ancient shepherds,—and have made some shrewd guesses as to the zodiac constellations.

The muleteers with the *soupe* arrive—also to take letters. Usual difficulties arrive over the distribution of potatoes. Calamity! the Sergeant's wine has not arrived. Now discussion as to whether a portion of lard goes with the meat!

Your loving
VICTOR.

Sunday, May 18, 1915.

Dear Alce: I am handsomely installed in a little niche on the side of a *boyau* with a board stretched across to write upon and a couple of sacks meant to put earth in, but now filled with straw. This is what the unambitious call the ideal trench life in the truly ideal trenches. The earth is the same brownish clay, but there is a little upper soil, hence no mud, besides it rarely rains. These make fine shooting-holes; and yet really, if you wish to shoot, it is much easier to climb out where you can get a good view above the grass. At Frise it was another situation. To put your head above was very dangerous, every *pelletée de terre* or end of a log which protruded above the *talus* level attracted a few humming balls. Here the fellows arranging their handsome *créneaux,* carelessly uncover themselves to the waist in broad noonday! And you can hardly see the German trenches even; with field glasses they look magnificent. I have not heard a bullet whistle overhead these three days—since the little artillery practice. I volunteered to do the *corvée d'eau* yesterday with a tall fellow, Samango, former student in Paris. Really, of course,

to get a good look at the *château.* It is a paradise, beautiful even in its destruction; and radiates a kind of melancholy serenity. It stands, a pile of brick and stone, roofless, save one wing, with broken pediment and windows gaping to the sky, surrounded by a moat, with great flat lawns on either side, rows of clipped trees and endless *allées.* Barbed wire entanglements encumber the avenue: shell holes cut the turf and gravel; everywhere there are mangled trees. The chapel must have been very fine. Four or five stone men kneeling, now half buried in the *débris* of the fallen vaults. An eighteenth century confession-box emerging from the ruins. But I took a couple of photos of the inside. The *façade* was the most interesting part, perhaps, since it is the least damaged. Over the low door a Gothic balcony surrounded by a small rose window: flamboyant tracing like the rest of the chapel. Two round towers which had conical roofs flank the whole and make a composition with good proportions. An original statue or two in place contrasts with the pile of rubbish,—against one side of which, secreted in a hole, is a telephone operator with wires leading to the *château.* On nearer examination of the latter I found it very plain, long, high windows on the second stories, with iron grilles, but lots of them—and dormers. I felt it lacked unity in composition a little. Every part except the west wing open to the sky from the ground up. Already the blackbirds had taken possession of the upper masonry and chattered incessantly. In the area of the *Escalier d'Honneur* were handsome pieces of the wrought iron balcony; very Louis XVI, Petit Trianon in feeling, and on the wall a huge genealogical chart in which the families of Belleforeire and Soyecourt traced themselves back to Hugh Capet. All those "court" names are Picardy; it is full of Moncourt, Merri-

court, Maricourt, etc. The present owner is an Englishman. It was he who restored the whole a few years ago (so says a Latin inscription), and I hold him responsible for the plaster plaques in the chapel, and a hideous green iron stage in the distance on the south lawn. Still, he did keep up the bits of formal garden and the trim lines of trees.

I read Lamb and have attacked The Autocrat. One has to eat such a lot to get a little nutrition that even a pig's time is not worth it. Here they're at it again—Bing—Bang—Bang! about ten number 12 shells of the Germans. Bing! a 75 bangs just over me. The latter are much more alarming, for they travel faster than sound, so one does not hear the *départ* till it whistles past. Even the German 77 one has time to jump; and these are the bigger caliber which they are playing today, perhaps even on the poor *château.*

We are going in *repos* for two days and I shall try to sketch the ruined chapel, etc.

Your loving
VICTOR.

Before I forget it, I just saw a little American chap who tells me of the *petite poste* where he watches from time to time. The trenches of his company are eight hundred metres from the enemy, but each side has long *boyaux* which lead out to little advance forts where a section at a time watch for half a day. Thirty odd metres off there is a similar German post. Of course they interchange expressions of disgust, usually at sunrise. I have noticed this before. I suppose it is because at that hour the officers of neither side are yet on the job. One Boche spoke up in French, "Don't shoot! What's the use?" A *Légionnaire* thereupon fired off a gun, whereupon the other responded "*Bande de salauds!*" Oh, some of

these Germans speak excellent French and better Parisian slang. A "type" we had opposite the Le Genuillere said he worked eight years with Felix Potin. One German rather got the Section's goat, as Dugan expressed it. For the longest time he upbraided them, his voice coming from somewhere near by. They searched all about and peeped from every corner of the little trench, but never a sign. At times he would call back to his friend in the German post, "Hans," who roared with laughter. Dugan now suspects that he must have been inside of an abandoned tin sprinkler. A couple of the section shot at a rabbit and one went out to look for the beast. He did not find it but came back without drawing any fire.

Ames has just got a paper and says Wilson has delivered a sharp note. Let us hope he follows it up. One, three, seven German shells passed overhead, response to half a dozen 75's. Otherwise the flies are the only noise-makers here. I am glad to see that certain sanitary precautions and disinfectants are being applied to the trenches. I have feared the hot weather on this subject and only hope strict orders will be given. Five more French shells!

Repos in Bas,
May 19, 1915.

Dear Papa: Our *pièce* (half section) came down from the trenches yesterday for *repos*. We walked through the great park, now vested in tiny young leaves. The vaulted avenues gave one somewhat the same underwater sensation we have on the Island. At the far end was a battery of artillery with the huts and shells of its servants mostly underground. A little to one side were improvised stables against the brick wall which encloses the property, and more huts of tree branches and evergreen boughs. The vil-

lage of Boub Boul they call it. I even saw a wigwam-shaped structure marked "*Rendez vous des cochers.*" It has been raining or clouded the last four days. Our "ideal" trenches have become mud bogs in spite of ingenious holes to draw off the water. But the woods are wonderful. I went out there on a *corvée de bois* this afternoon (enclosed a lily-of-the-valley I picked). The *château* I spoke of I hear had at least 5000 shells emptied into it. Imagine what a stupid waste of ammunition.

Off for the post.

Your loving
VICTOR.

May 21, 1915.

Dear Papa: We (the *pièce*) are going up to the trenches for six days after our three days *repos*. We hear from our friends the German and Austrian Poles, etc., who were sent away from us, that they afterwards joined the *2me de Marche,* and that the latter has been north of Arras and has suffered very much. One company (250) is reduced to 43. Dessauer, I may have spoken of, was wounded there. Here the days pass quietly. The Germans send three or four shells in search of the French batteries hidden in the woods. Near us in the trenches there is one spot where the German 77s send four shells every afternoon, never more nor less than four. At the fourth explosion half a dozen fellows jump out of the trench and scramble in the turned up ground for the *fusées*. You may have noticed in the *communiqué* a week ago that there was an attack at Frise which was repulsed. One German was taken prisoner. When questioned why they had never attacked all winter he answered that they knew the *Légion* was opposite them, and though the latter appeared not to be very good shots, their fame at

the bayonet was such that the Germans feared a hand-to-hand conflict.

Your loving
VICTOR.

May 23, 1915.

Dear Alce: I wrote a good letter to MacVeagh yesterday afternoon in a coffin-like hole I made for myself back of the cabin in the beet roots. This morning, in fact most of the day, Ames and I have shoveled and picked to cave out for ourselves a "bureau." Two seats facing each other with a small door shoved into the earth horizontally to form a writing desk. It is the first time we have a really civilized place to write in. I never realized till this minute how much easier it is than forever balancing a book or board on one's knees. Did I tell you that the *2me de Marche* has suffered heavily at Arras? Recurrent rumor has it that there are but 180 effectives left. Meanwhile we here are as quiet as we would be at Barrytown. Once every half-hour, usually less often, a single rifle report. Not even the shells. There is, in fact, a general order not to shoot,—to make believe that the trenches have been evacuated.

Your loving
VICTOR.

May 25, 1915.

Dear Alce: Ames has become so sad and depressed lately that, to cheer him up, I have been giving him English lessons. I find that I benefit by the instruction nearly as much as he, not to speak of the pleasure of teaching an intelligent mind. He seems to grasp the grammar very readily. We have not been doing it long enough to see how much he retains. Yester-

day a man of the 92nd shot a Boche out of a tree: towards evening a couple went out and brought him in. He was shot through the shoulder. A young fellow, without malice. He gave his revolver to the fellow who pulled him down; said he came from Hamburg but had not heard from home for three months. He wore very used corduroys and a vest,—no hat. I talked to a couple of fellows who had talked to him. Yes, he knew considerable French. He said, that "of course Italy's declaration of war was a huge lie since the latter was siding with Germany and going to take up arms for that cause."

Later: I have been down the line to see an American who, it was rumored, was formerly in the *2me de Marche*. A heavyset man he was, over thirty, and was wounded by a shrapnel in the foot. Born in Maine, living in Richmond. He had thrown up a job on the "Old Dominion" line, James river, to come over. He said the French soldiers at the hospital where he was at Beauvais were much nicer than the *Légion*. "Why, this is a regular menagerie," he added. (I seem to have dropped into the reporter interview style.) Still he had no grudge against the Regiment. He told me some of the happenings in section D which I was not acquainted with. When they first came up in December, those who had a moment carved out berths in the side of the trenches. Well, of course, after a couple of heavy rains the whole wet soil would fall in. Woe to the inhabitant! The Persian Prince (son of the minister) was thus suffocated. His *copans* began digging him out by the feet and it took forty-five minutes. It appears there were several other cases afterwards; but the fellows learned their lesson and after that began at the head. The American himself was partially buried. Fahnsworth has been talking to me about Australian bush, horse-breaking, sheep-herding, etc. A *simula-*

cre attaque last night from Germans. All over in ten minutes.

Your loving
VICTOR.

June 2, 1915.

Dear Conrad and Chanler: No: the stamp on the envelope does not mean I have changed my company. I suppose you look upon me as fighting morning and evening with the tenacious German Infantry,—dodging great armor-plated shells, while a constant purr and hiss of German bullets sounds a few inches above my head. Well, it is nothing of the sort now. We occupy one of those *secteurs* in a plain, where the German trenches are nearly half a mile off and both the enemy and ourselves are anxious to be let alone as much as possible. We live in the usual labyrinth of *boyaux* and trenches with what you might call the trench emblem,—the eternal beet root,—now sprouting tall on their second year's growth. In the very early morning sometimes one hears the distant crack —sput! of a rifle or the low p-uzz of an already spent bullet coming by; but, except for an occasional demonstration of German artillery and once or twice a week a little shooting of shrapnel at a passing aeroplane, the only sounds are men's and birds' voices. At night we each mount guard for two hours,—that is, stand about in the neighborhood of the *pièce* (machine gun). Sometimes between 5:30 and 7 the *jus* (coffee) arrives. This is the occasion of waking the sergeant who suggests that we sweep up a little round the *pièce,* and *donner un coup de balayage au boyau.* The water should have been brought on the previous evening in a large demijohn. If so inclined, one washes superficially, or even shaves. "*Après avoir cassé la croûte,*" a slice of bread, with butter if we have any, and I indulge in scrambled

eggs, when I have them. Sometime between 9:30 and 11 two muleteers arrive with the *soupe,* consisting of the wine (*pinar*), boiled beef (*bidoche*), and a greasy warm liquid, usually containing disintegrated boiled potatoes, the soup proper and the bread. Sometimes we have canned meat (*singe*) and, once in a while, macaroni (*nouilles*). Another superficial sweep, then a relapse till sometime after five o'clock, when another two muleteers bring the *soupe*—(only vegetables and meat this time), same as before in appearance and taste. The events of the day are the arrival of letters and the newspapers. A *corvée d'eau* is sent off,—two men with the "*bon bon*" strung between them on a stick, to the village. At night the Companies send out *patrouilles* of 8 to 15 men,—bayonettes on their guns, a few cartridges in their pockets, but no *cartouchière* or *cintinor*. They crawl about in the beets and clover for a couple of hours and return. There used to be a certain amount of mystery about these patrols; but since they have never yet met a German patrol and the leaders are not endued with that reckless courage necessary to enter the German trenches and bring a man or two back, interest is slackening. When it is dark or the moon overcast both sides send up rockets from time to time which twinkle and bob in the distance, like unnatural stars. As you can imagine, we are more or less restrained to live in the compass of a few yards, see the same people, hear the same remarks, do the same jobs day after day. What the French call the *caffard* sets in. It seems too much trouble to do more than the barest necessities. I feel that this is a most excellent apprenticeship for the job of tending a light-house or light-ship. At first when the place is new, the work is interesting, the events (storms, etc.) are exciting; then one loses more and more the outside point of view. The fine sunsets and sunrises get

monotonous, the people one thought picturesque and amusing at first sight, lose their interest, and you have recourse to books, magazines and newspapers. Of course here I do a little more. Give English lessons, for instance.

I'll get this off and write another letter.

Your loving
VICTOR.

June 2, 1915.

Dear Papa: Thank you ever so much for the letter describing in detail all the anti-gas inventions as yet devised. I am greatly impressed by this expression of paternal affection. Of course I carry in the back of my head the belief that this regiment will never be in danger from the deadly clouds. We had to leave the Frise section for lack of men to hold it, and now our two battalions together are reduced to 1200 men while a regiment should have 4 or 5 of 1000 each. I have been taking enormous interest in the English changes in government. Is it not the first coalition cabinet since those shabby failures at the end of the 18th century? The only sinister note I have noticed in the whole procedure is Redmond's refusal to join the cabinet. The English papers are awfully serious; no rosy war pictures. I should think that England ought to put itself under martial law as France has done, if she really wants to get down to business. Is that labor leader, Henderson, a stiff-necked bigot, or will he add strength and not friction to the ministry?

What is the betting on the U. S. action now? Even the French papers say that Bryan is a "peace-at-any-price man" who is trying for the Nobel Prize. The Mexican question must be getting serious, I see from a note in the French paper.

C——, the Portugee West African ship-captain,

has been explaining to me the points of a compass and how one directs a ship by it. It is often very difficult to follow since he drops into Portuguese at times, and his French is so highly colored by the former language that it is only a practiced ear or a Spaniard that can catch the important words. Fine weather here. The Germans put out two little green flags with Arabic characters saying that this was a holy war. Our *patrouille* pulled up one and brought it in. A bomb was attached, but luckily did not go off.

Off with the mail.

Your loving
VICTOR.

June 4, 1915.

Dear Alce: I have just received your letter enclosing Cowdin's. My wishes are stronger and stronger to leave this regiment. To sit here week after week reading essays and taking a mild interest in the war without any outlet or relief, save *sales corvées,* while the wreck of this regiment gets battered to and fro by fate, and the members have nothing better to do than wager when it will sink, is nothing more or less than prison life—interesting as an experience, but I have served my term.

Enough! Enough! It comes down to this: From the outside point of view I have done a " noble " act and perhaps gathered honor in so doing. But from the practical point of view I have thrown away ten months of my life, neither helped the French nor injured the Germans. I have counted merely as a unit, and a rather troublesome one, perhaps, because I had ideas, and would not always stay put. You, and especially Papa, don't seem to realize that the Franco-German-Front is like a chain nailed at certain points. As long as the nails remain firmly

planted the chain cannot budge. The only reason for the continuous line of trenches is to keep the opponent from making marauding expeditions with cavalry, etc. or sending large forces to get the main troops of the opponent in the rear. The " dreadful " trenches, where we were all winter, could just as well have been inhabited by women and children for all the good the men did. A lively fusillade to answer the enemy two or three times a month. The noise might even have been marvellously imitated by bunches of fire-crackers. As for these trenches where we are now: a sentinel every half mile, with a regiment playing dominoes in the village to come up through the wood in case of general attack, communicated with by telephone, would serve the purpose equally well. The Government has the troops, so it puts them at the Front and keeps them busy digging second and third line trenches for want of a better occupation. The German artillery would open up on the Companies if they took to manœuvring practice. That furious bombardment of T—— was due to an aeroplane having spotted a company at work in the streets the preceding morning. As you see in the papers, daily artillery is what counts in this war—ammunitions galore. Meanwhile we sit here wearing down the enemies' morale. But egotistically speaking, why should I stay here when a Hooligan out of Paris could fill my place to better advantage? Aside from the fact that the Captain prides himself on having Ames and myself, like rare birds, to boast of to his fellow officers: " American millionaires! Came here for the war! Odd, ain't it! ", he has often said that he deplored the fact that we were not professional *terrassiers* (ditchers).

To continue: What have I got out of this life, and what more shall I get? Lots of amusing experiences, some sad ones, seeing the making of the war in the

remote parts of the Front, meeting all manner of men on the same level,—a few hardships at the beginning, but unfortunately none now—that would make things interesting. And the putting up with a great deal of damn foolery, which luckily slides off my back. Oh yes, I have learned more worldly wisdom:—when it pays to lie, the necessity of stealing small indispensables, and what a world one can do with a "*culot monstre,*" or as we say in America "What a lot you can get away with by sheer cheek." But as for my personal habits, I am every bit, nay, twice as untidy, and as for laziness—why, my former self was a model of untiring zeal! I hardly think I am a strong enough character not to be influenced by my environment, where everyone's only aim is to do as little and get out of as much as possible. As for developing my character and forces, I have long since given up any forlorn hopes that whispered the possibility of better things. I shall merely become more slothful, less efficient, and less fit to do work afterwards.

As for Aviation, I was too irresolute and inarticulate at Amiens to give free vent to my feelings, and with the bunting that popular heroes are made of lying so thick, I did not like to show my true self. I have read Cowdin's letter; but it is perfectly obvious that I am not wanted and have been foisted on them by Uncle Willy and Papa. This is Prince's and Cowdin's show, they got it up. It was not for Americans in general. If I had been hauled out of the *Légion* in February I might have been a charter member of the Club, but I would not think of joining now. He is a most polite intelligent fellow, Cowdin, I can see, and is having the time of his life. It's not as dangerous as they say. I have seen them nearly every bright day when often fifty shells leave white balls in the sky, and not yet have I seen one disabled. What

shall I do when I get back in the "civil"? Well, I have not yet given up aeroplaning, and on other lines there are thousands of interesting things to do, and you forget that if ever I get homesick for this life again (may the devil damn me black!) I can always re-engage.

Well, if I could get up interest enough to write a letter like this every morning I should not feel so unhappy, but it takes favorable circumstances to be undisturbed (there is no real privacy, of course), and I have pretty well drained all my spigots of over-flowing ideas, besides my habitual inertness is not easily overcome. We go down this afternoon. I am not looking forward to it particularly, though since most of the muleteers have gone, I hear that we shall exercise the animals. You see it has taken 3 weeks of hopeful waiting and then a set-back to bring my fluctuating ideas into tangible form. But they were born in March.

Your loving
VICTOR.

June 12, 1915.

Dear Alce: Well, the unexpected always happens by experience. It is not the Boches, but the weather which gives us the trouble. This time it was a shower shortly after dark night before last. Just a summer thunder storm, only it lasted an hour and a half to two hours, and was a tropical deluge. The effect on our trenches, which, you will remember, are in absolutely level plain, was most astonishing and horrible. First, little by little all our neatly carved cubby-holes, shelves, and benches, melted away. The steeper sides of the *boyaux* came sliding, and then the water began to rise in the bottom of the trenches. If you consider that every shelter, or sleeping burrow, is like a subway entrance along the side of the

boyaux you can realize the seriousness of the danger. In the dark, half-naked, we pushed and pulled the sticky, liquid mud, pulled down sacks, *créneaux*, logs, anything to make a barrier. We succeeded finally and I waded up to my thighs to see how the others had fared. The other place was a well, full, up to the top of the stairs. The Lieutenant I found lying on his bed, a high one set in the wall, while chairs and tables floated among empty bottles and bits of wood. He was quite dry, he said. But a quarter of an hour after, a second freshet raised the water level above the bed. In that region, ours, and one other, were the only cabins saved. The machines, being on raised stands, did not suffer, and we had put the boxes of cartridges out of danger.

The next morning we began damming off the trenches at intervals, and emptying one portion at a time. Many had suffered worse than we. The First Section spent most of the night reinforcing dykes on three sides to keep the water from swamping their *pièces* and all. And some of the companies had all their belongings, sacks, etc., drenched. I don't believe there were ten rifles in our Section that would have functioned properly. All day we worked with bucket chains to get the water out, and then the soft mud, six inches deep on the bottom. Our companions-in-woe across the wire entanglements must have suffered equally, for we really did see them scrambling about on the horizon. Somebody organized a *feu de salve* and brought down three or four, as the story runs. As was to be expected they retaliated and killed a fellow who was showing himself near us. It remained overcast all day so nothing dried. I could not take good photographs. Of course bare feet and trousers rolled up to the last notch were the general equipment. Luckily there was a hedge behind which one could walk instead of

taking the *boyaux;* for those leading out were, in places, nearly full.

There are several cases on record, in the Company beside us, of fellows having swum with the morning coffee to reach their squad yesterday. The Lieutenant behaved wonderfully tactfully and democratically, living with us and even falling-to with the buckets. He telephoned to the Captain *à propos* of something yesterday afternoon. The Captain hoped things were better now and advised him to make a fire in his *abri!* The stove had been two feet under water for the past 18 hours. The Company Commandants acted with vigor and intelligence having been drowned out with their men,—and spent the entire night wading aimlessly about in dripping clothes. Half sections from the other Battalion, came up in spotless *tenue* and were set to shoveling mud. Also a couple of pumps have been installed.

Your loving

VICTOR.

I have lost all my pipes in the scramble. A big straight one would be very gratefully received.

June 19, 1915.

Dear Uncle Willy: I enclose some of the photos I have taken lately. I am sorry that they should be so uninteresting, but the confounded Germans have taken to using smokeless powder in their shells, at least the ones we get. So, though they pepper us harmlessly about once or twice a week I can get no snaps. We are now trying to take the cabin interiors by flash light. At first we used powder from cartridges, but last evening we found an unused rocket between the trenches and now hope for excellent results. You would not believe it,—I still have nearly everything you gave me before leaving. Both sweaters, rather tattered but in constant serv-

ice,—one has the famous bullet hole through it. The automatic looking very fit. The sleeping bag was lost at Cailleaux but I had another given to me by a friend. The camera, of course, well to the front, and the shoes the family admired so much still as good as new. (The very handsome high pair Mr. Jaccaci gave me, are showing signs of wear sadly, in spite of repairs.) Do you know about our new Lieutenant, *i. e.* in the *mitrailleuse?* A tall light-haired Zcheck. His brother's regiment was sent down to Serbia at the beginning of the war and was deliberately wiped out by Austrian artillery. So he joined the French. The ring-making craze is all the rage, I don't think there is a man here without several. A slight bombardment is greeted with pleasure because of its deposit of aluminum pieces which are promptly melted down into tubes and sawed off into rings. There are rumors of going to *repos.* Meanwhile we are always in the same place.

Your affectionate nephew,

VICTOR.

Enclosed four photographs. Many more coming.

June 22, 1915.

Dear Papa: Thank you very much for the Swiss newspaper. That article of Rolland is the most interesting one I have seen in some time. Are they not reprinting it in some Paris paper? If so, could I not see one or two if you run across them? The last very handsome Marquand respirator arrived. My companions liken me to the Englishman who received twenty-seven masks the day after the Germans were known to use gas. Nothing has happened here at all. We do our six days in the trenches and three days at *repos* like clock-work and count time by them rather than by the days of the week. There are rumors of great conflicts to the north, displace-

ment of troops, etc., but you know how baseless most of our " inside information " is. Tell Alce I have just finished a ten page letter to Mme. Kohn. I fitted up my " bureau " so that my light would not show, and sat up half the night. Bianchi has just made me an ink-stand out of a 105 *fusée.* He has got together the files, chisels and vises necessary and turns them out almost as fast as people bring him the *fusées.* I am trying to get a seal ring made, but the jewelers claim they cannot work well without their instruments. The trades sometimes strike one oddly here, as the negro who refused to cook for his company because it would spoil his *métier:* he was a real chef. And the tailor who examined Ames, when he first came, and ejaculated that the suit must have cost at least 200 francs. Just so the other day I asked a fellow who said he had studied dentistry, to look at my mouth. (I'm worried over three holes I have found.) *" Laisse voir! oh, laisse voir! Quelle beau travail! Ça vaut au moins deux mille francs. Au moins."* And I inwardly thought what genuine pleasure he would have examining at leisure my skull if he found it rolling round the field. Incidentally he is a Roumanian and, though he was studying with his brother in New York, he came over to join. I think such fellows deserve more credit than if they had been already here.

Your loving
VICTOR.

June 30, 1915.

Dear Alce: Just a line: we are on the move. Yesterday noon we left the trenches and started north. Evidently there have been orders and counter-orders, for the first Battalion spent a night near St. Juste. Got to this village at midnight and were awakened by the fortieth wending through with drum and

horn. A real Regiment, four full Battalions. The summer *poilu* is a much nicer looking man than the winter,—clean-shaved, save a short mustache, and has a much more spick-and-span appearance.

Your loving
VICTOR.

Provisionally in the 2d Line Trenches,
July 2, 1915.

Dear Alce: A twilight march laden down with full *musettes* and blankets "*en bandelière,*" followed by our mules and guns on a straight highroad. Flat country with little groups of trees and villages silhouetted on the horizon. We met a company of Territorials coming back from hay-making, each with a huge rake and one of those straight-handled, broad-bladed scythes which are only associated with Father Time and other antiquated symbols. A long walk in wide and very crooked *boyaux* with the *pièces;* and here we met "*encadrés*" with reserve troops which have been here since they drove the Germans out in October. In a high voice the little guide, who was bringing a couple of cases for us, pointed out, "In this clump of trees we drove them back from that hedge, the 307th followed them up." And it was so sultry and dark that we, new arrivals, could not see anything. His whole intonation, and almost his accent, reminded me of a small Irishman. Celtic perhaps. The fellows mounting guard talked another incomprehensible dialect. I was rather surprised to find myself as much out of it with a French Regiment as with our Legionary companions. This morning I found one of them, who had come from the depot just after the attack in October, telling my *copains* about the *fusée* and German cartridges. His point of view was that of Perry when he mourned the extinction of lobsters in Maine.

"*Mon pauvre ami*" (this seems to be a friendly expression in the locality), why, when I first came here there were two *fusées* to every beet root and beautiful unblemished ones all of aluminum. As for Boche cartridges, why, the trenches were full of them, for the scoundrels were well stocked and did not expect to be driven out. Why, I'll wager our regiment alone sent home three wagon loads of *porte-plumes,—mais maintenant une balle Boche ça se vend à quart sous pièce.* There are fellows here who have made fifty rings each. And now you can pick the whole field over and never a sign! The *salauds* only send us now useless things in brass.

July 3, 1915.

I went to sleep before finishing and had a total relaxation from War, etc., by—what do you think? Reviewing Harvard Dental School requirements and talking over exams, and board-and-lodging with Ames, who thinks he'll take up that profession when he gets out. A little curé from the Tours Seminary (now a *brancardier*) came round and showed us his "chapel,"—an altar literally bursting with flowers, wild and cultivated, some in garlands and some in empty shells. . . .

Your loving
VICTOR.

July 14, 1915.

Dear Alce: Twenty-four hours in cattle cars; but rather amusing all the same. Great work embarking the horses and mules in the pouring rain yesterday. This goes from Belfort. Very pretty scenery, the last few miles mountains like the Camden Hills. We have enough to eat somehow. One man got left getting wine, but has caught us on an express. We are going to the Swiss frontier *en repos.* A few trenches and a French "sausage" are the only active

war signs, besides old soldiers guarding the rails. Oh yes, one *corvée* with shovels and picks.

Your loving
VICTOR.

July 16, 1915.

Dear Alice: Well, we are in the seventh heaven and the full expectation of really getting into an attack for we are *versé* into the famous *2me de Marche*. It was this regiment which attacked at Carency and the neighborhood on the 9th of May and withstood (the three divisions) eleven German divisions in the contre-attack the 16th of June. It is perhaps the most famous regiment in the French forces on account of these two facts; but, of course, there is nothing left of it to speak of—(4000 casualties, the ninth and sixteenth of May, cost). They are a few old *légionnaires,* and the rest volunteers; but they are soldiers, and the officers know their business and do not haggle over matters of form in the cantonment but speak to us straight. "We have to do this and this because it will be necessary in the fight." Everything not essential to battle will not be insisted upon.

We arrived on the night of the fourteenth at Montbeliard and slept in the old castle perched over the town, now a barrack,—a typical German schloss, with round towers, storied gables,—even an iron bear coming out of the masonry rocks in the wall. Now we are billeted in a little village less than a dozen miles south of Belfort. We and all the *mitrailleuse,* together with the Division Moroccan, *i. e.* the Turcos and Zouaves—what is left of them. Our Teek Lieutenant remains to command our sections. The new Captain is an efficient fellow who belongs to the active and has served two Moroccan campaigns. Likewise the other Lieutenant. The original officers, of course, met their fate at Arras.

The country here is hilly, woody and far more beautiful than the Picardy country. The houses and farms are high and of stone and rubble,—round arches, and no barn-yards. And the population is violently patriotic. Only too ready to help the soldiers. I believe they would deprive themselves of milk and eggs to serve the soldiers. I have found Herédia in the company encamped in the next village, but as yet have not had a good talk with him. He took part in the second affair at Arras, and gave us a short, disjointed and amusing description of it. One cannot sit down here in a café but the fellow opposite launches into horrible detailed descriptions, with glaring eyes and forced gestures. It seems to have affected many of them as the colossal catastrophe of their lives. The cannonade and being with the dead and rotting has been too much for them. However the best balanced fellows, like Herédia, are unaffected, and the morale of the regiment is very high despite their losses.

Your loving
VICTOR.

July 16, 1915.

Dear Papa: I am writing from a café in a sizable town into which we have sneaked after the soup. Hericourt it is called, and the streets are swarming with Zouaves and Turcos who are perhaps the most picturesque of French soldiers. They no longer have the breezy red trousers; but they retain the red *fez*, which is worn in a hundred jaunty fashions over a cropped head. The rest of the costume consists of a short jacket and bloomers, both of khaki.

In our little village are only the *Mitrailleuse* sections, but there are Zouaves and bronze Turcos (or Bicos as they are called), squatting against the houses whose shingled walls are tapestried with

trained pear trees. It is a great pleasure to see this rolling land well-wooded, and the yokes of white and yellow oxen on the winding road. The impressions of the different units of the 3d at being thrown into the 2nd Regiment of March are diverse. We, the *Mitraille,* are joyous,—good chiefs, fair treatment, and sure fighting before us.

July 18, 1915.

Dear Alce: Yesterday we marched thirty odd kilometres up into the foot-hills of Alsace: we shall cross over into the German possessions tomorrow, I think. Back in Picardy I was beginning to think that I was fed up with the country, and that nature had no more charms for me; but once here in these hills and woods with quaint cottages and running streams I have new interest. Yes: they are somewhat like the Catskills, and it pours and then shines much the same. I have just been in a butcher shop. A rambling stone edifice,—part house, part barn,—yet all under one peak roof. Walking through a passage by the wood pile, I found myself in a very dark, low-timbered room, one small window and a door giving on the garden. Full half the ceiling was hung with hams, sausages, bacons, and the like; while in the corner next the stove was a huge square chimney, open to the sky, fitted with rods on which hung rows of sausages. A hearty-faced man with a black soft hat came in, looking, with his stocky build, the image of the figures of Teniers and his period. A beefy woman served *de la Surade* with evident pleasure; and then, at his suggestion, I was shown three handsome old pieces of furniture,—a chest and two of those high combination closets and *bureaux.* All were interesting. There was also a little spinning wheel in the corner which she still used.

As for our future, it is, we are convinced, full of

glory and adventure. Hindenburg is commanding in Louvain, and Joffre is at Belfort, the papers say. All the Moroccan division, both regiments of the *Légion,* three of Zouaves and two of Turcos, are here. Fighting in the woods and mountains is much more picturesque than in the plains, and we cannot be cannonaded with heavy artillery, nor will it be the deadly monotonous trench warfare.

In marching through the villages yesterday, I saw the number two (2) and enquired for the American section. Finally I came upon it and found Seeger. I have never seen him in such good health. Why, he hardly looks himself! The *2me Étranger* has more *Légionnaires* even than the *2me de Marche.* I don't think they have done as much as the *3me de Marche,* though of course they were well officered. I am going to look him up again when I have finished this letter. He is in the other end of the same village. He seems to have plenty of money, and to be content with his lot.

Did I tell you I found Herédia? He is really in need of help for he has not a man in his section with whom he can have a sympathetic friendship. The Corporal is an old legionary, and most of the squad are South American professional pick-pockets and sneak thieves, whom the Paris police led gently to the Recruiting Office, so that they might do no more harm.

Please send me my little Bible and my camera and stuff as soon as possible. Of course I have not had a letter since I left you at Paris, nor shall I for some days since we are on the move. I still look forward to the aeroplane corps; but I rather relish seeing a bit of fighting first.

I doubt if I see you before you sail.

Your loving
VICTOR.

Seeger sends his best regards.

July 21, 1915.

Dear Alce: I wonder if I conveyed to you how well off we consider ourselves? Bianchi summed it all up by saying he did not use to believe in God, but since —— and —— have left and we keep the Lieutenant and acquire such a Captain, he does, *sans blague.* I shall regret it sincerely if my recall comes now before we have had an attack. The regiment, as I told you before, did incredible things at Arras; and yesterday it all turned out in a big field and without too much *blair* the Colonel decorated our *Mitrailleuse* Captain and six or eight of his men, besides giving the *croix de guerre* to two of the original section for having sustained a fierce counter attack, thereby holding valuable ground. Today being our third or fourth day only in the company (for the second old section of the 3*me de Marche* have been put in with the third of the 2nd) we arranged a target on a cliff and did a little shooting practice. I believe we shall do it every other day or so. This Captain knows his job and though they say he is strict he leaves us alone and we have great liberty. I have been down into the town and dined with Seeger and a Harvard undergraduate called King. He seems rolling in luxuries, smokes imported cigarettes and refuses to make a row when the bill is three times what it should be.

I now predict that my heavenly prospects are just going to miss each other by hair-breadths—you will sail before I either get four days furlough or change to aviator. I shall be transferred to the Aviation just before this company goes into action and makes a brilliant attack. And the war will end just before I get my license and go to the front.

What I want to impress upon you is that I am very happy here and doing intelligent exercise preparatory to some energetic attack, in a beautiful valley with contented, interesting companions. But there seems

no hope of my getting my four days permission before you go. Love to Papa.

Your loving
VICTOR.

July 26, 1915.

Dear Alice: Of course I am prepared to leap with joy when my transfer does come. I was merely stating my feeling at being in a real regiment. You must think me very sunken in social morals to want to jilt what you have crossed the ocean for and have been working on for months. The Lieutenant gave us a little talk the other day on various prescribed subjects. In passing, he said the trouble with me was that I had too much *sang froid*. Perhaps it's true. I don't move fast enough in critical junctures. Yesterday, being Sunday, we had *repos*. I bored myself at mass; but I found Herédia afterwards and arranged a *rendezvous* for the afternoon. I came up to the village in the valley where they were, and met Farnsworth, Sokovna and Herédia. We wandered up the stream to a very pretty double cascade, and then I induced the rest to go up the mountainside, to get a view from the ridges of the country. Very steep work it was, in thickly forested slopes of spruce and beech. We came at last to the ridge, and lo! there was a stone wall, smooth meadow-land, and in the hollow, near the center, a jolly little village with a church. Then wooded ravines, filmy blues and grays, vistas of plains. Farnsworth and Herédia went down to order dinner, while Sokovna and I chased round the rim of the bowl and sought more views. We thought we saw the foothills of the Alps; but I doubt it. The dinner was sumptuous,—new fried potatoes, not to speak of bacon and eggs, and ending off with blueberry pie and raspberries. The forbidden wine, Kirsch (home made), warned us that we must start

for home, half an hour by the path and all downhill. We soon lost the path in the darkness; but were guided by the lights below us. I should say it *was* downhill—one's feet wandered off into air and then fell upon rolling stones, and ever the elusive shades of our comrades flitting on below. Again and again the ground seemed to become more gradual only to dive off steeper. Whether it was the good food or the stiff walk or both together, I don't know; at any rate I have been laid up with a most violent stomachache for the last twenty-four hours.

As all such happy *ballades* end we walked all four almost down the main street and were accosted by the *sergeant-du-jour* who took our names, and companies for a *rapport* of having been found in the street ten minutes after the *appel*. Though I live in dread, nothing has come of it yet.

I hardly think I put it strongly enough in the first of this letter how thankful I should be to be rid of lice once and for all, sleep in something better than straw, and have a table and chair to use. After this war if ever anyone asks me to go on a picnic I think I shall never speak to him again! However, there's a lot of difference in doing a thing one's own way.

Your loving
VICTOR.

Aviation

AVIATION

AVIATION

August 8, 1915.

Dear Alce: You ought to know when this reaches you that I have finally changed corps. A typical instance of the way things are done in the army is the way I was told the news. I was sitting in the sunshine playing mumble-the-peg with three or four others before mounting squad. Ames came up and whispered in my ear that a sergeant had just told him I was going to the Aviation. An hour or so later the sergeant, in an off-hand way, said I was to leave. That evening I met the Lieutenant who begged me not to forget to drop him a card. When or whither I was leaving no one seemed to know. The next day I almost collared the Lieutenant and we went together to the Bureau. Oh, yes, the demand had come for me to be sent without delay to the Gare Regulatrice de Gray: I was leaving at seven the next morning. With many *adieux* and five fellows helping me on with my sack, I got off and presented myself in due course at the station of Champagny with a sealed letter of the *Commissionaire Militaire.*

The contents of the letter proved that it was quite unnecessary to go to Gray since my destination was Nancy. "Change at Lure." A jolly unmodern town with a Grande Rue, Louis Quinze windows, keystones, a pond and trees, and a provincial brownstone Louis XIV *château,*—now the *Sous-préfecture.* At Ailleures, I waited again three hours. It was some time before I could find the town here. Finally I saw it across the track on a hill a mile off, with stone church, the image of a New England eighteenth

century wood structure. Less amusing town than Lure, but with very pretty children (to whom I gave the cakes which a drummer had forced upon me in a café of Lure), and chickens perched on the window-sills. Groups of old women and young girls were industriously stuffing green *litre* bottles with new string beans; and I found an old farmer before the tobacco shop with a handsome yoke of oxen actually tied together with nothing more or less than his umbrella! Oh, I forgot to tell you of the typical canny, old hay-seed that talked endlessly to a well-groomed country lawyer or doctor, in the train from Lure, about how much you could make on sheep in certain pastures: what were the best varieties of clover for early harvest: what kinds of grasses to plant with wheat: and why the old-fashioned brown barley was better than the other varieties in spite of its obvious defects, etc., and I could *not* get to sleep. He took me to a café with a territorial friend whom he found guarding at the station. We drank beer and they took snuff and both gave me sound advice on aviation—they were versed in mechanics,—the one knew a mowing-machine and the other ran a flour mill. Incidentally they were not a little dissatisfied with the military bureaucracy: "These Parisian shop keepers who have never had as much as they are now touching a month as Captains, dealing out four days prison to respectable men of 45, requisitioning straw, etc." With difficulty I boarded the express. "Guilty of something underhand until proved to the contrary," seems the attitude of all the military officials. And they only let one by with a kind of despairing, resigned air, as though saying: "I suppose I'll have to. You beat me this time!" A pale, olive-complexioned young woman with a fair-haired little girl of two, sat opposite me. It was easy to see by her calm, resolute, yet sad, face that

she had lost her husband in the war, even if she were not dressed in black. A grandmother and two uninteresting *backfisch* studiously read inferior funny sheets and *deux sous* novels. A tall respectable gentleman was resentfully given a place by the females.

I reached Nancy at 8:30 and, after the usual examination, started on a train to Malzéville. Hardly a street lamp anywhere, yet in the darkness I saw a handsome mediaeval town-gate with towers and rows of gargoyles on the eaves of the houses we passed. At Nancy the train goes no further. "Twenty-five minutes' walk up hill and with a sac! Are you mad?" This the advice of a couple of men who had just joined the Corps as mechanics. I turned to the café on the street corner and asked for information about Hotels. *"Eh toi! Poilu! d'où viens tu? Viens, prends un bock."* In the semi-darkness on the sidewalk sat two *fantassins,* two girls and an old man. They were all in exuberant spirits as though they had just met, and pressed me with questions. Where did I come from? going where? seen fighting? etc., all mixed in with adoring by-play between the sexes. I launched forth on the *Légion,* the Aviation, *engagé volontier;* and incidentally let them know that I came from *some* Regiment—of which not much was left now, but which showed its temper at Carency, de Bettrau, de Lorette, etc. "And where do you come from?" said I. "Bois le Prêtre." Oh! I changed my tone. Bois le Prêtre:—the Germans call it the Forest of Death—is about the most famous and dangerous section on all the Front, and the only place really on a par with Arras because of the heavy fighting there since last autumn. "Yes, we have been there a year now and I tell you we were glad to get off." "On permission?" "No, we just beat it. It's only twenty kilometres off. M., here, is a telephonist,

and we got across the Moselle bridge by pretending to be mending the line." The beer was very, very good. "*Tiens, je connais un Americain de l'ambulance. Son nom de famille ne me reviens pas, mais tout le monde l'appelle 'Villie.' C'est le type le plus charmant, le plus gentil que je n'ai jamais vu.*" Of course it was Willie Iselin. The long and the short of it, I was taken to the house of the larger *Poilu.* The prettiest girl was his wife, the other, the wife of his foreman, —he being a rubber manufacturer and engineer. His friend, the telephonist, who wore the regimental blue tie as though it were a silk cravat at a wedding, was in the Peugeot automobile business. Everything in the house was higgledy-piggledy: two days' unwashed dishes in the kitchen; but who cared? Cold meats were produced from somewhere, lima beans heated, much time and discussion was expended on a *mayonnaise* which looked splendid when finally created; but later we discovered it to be devoid of vinegar. Red wine and champagne, and then a fellow in blue jeans came in, very solemn, like the boy in Pickwick grown older, and explaining how he had found the house the first try, sat down at the end of the table. "One of my workmen," said M. B——, "in the artillery, wounded twice, has *croix de guerre.*" The round faced man remained very quiet all through dinner; but I suspect he consumed his share of the seductive white *liqueur* which I was introduced to, called *Mirabelle,*—a great friend for trench-life, but there is such a thing as pushing it too far.

They told me how from time to time they had private truces with the German sentinels, traded cigars and magazines, even had signals—three shots in the air for a change of guards, so that the other fellow should know that he must not show himself any more. "Odd, the way it works, this mobilization of labor and recall of mechanics from the Front,"

said the rubber manufacturer, showing me a wad of what appeared to be mattress-stuffing, "the beard I shaved this morning. They have requisitioned my shop and pay me one franc a day, besides they intend to remove the lathes, etc. (Not if I know it!) Now being a *patron* I recall my men, but I can't recall myself. Hence I remain at Bois le Prêtre." Finally the little old man with the drooping gray moustache took me to his house where I slept in a feather bed with a Mauser and a Bavarian *casque* on the wall beside me. I took coffee with the *poilus* next morning and presented each girl with a little aluminum ring.

Here I find myself in the Escadrille of Cowdin and Prince; but for the moment they are both away, Cowdin getting another machine at Paris, and Prince in the north with a *cannon de* 35.

August 9.

Queer crowd these mechanic *embusqués,* so far as comfort goes! Yet they go out and get pulled down with equanimity. They have the civilian's point of view of the dangers of the war, yet think nothing of it when their *copan* so-and-so gets killed trying out a new machine. It's because it's their profession,—most of them were in it before the war. This letter was disturbed last evening by the Brittany sailors.—They are here for the little cannon that are mounted on some of the machines. *"La Loopine! le voilà qui fait la loopine!"* Running out behind the little pine groves onto the plain, all about on the horizon were the *voisins* sailing slowly like buzzards, or passing serenely overhead. But right above was a small moth-shaped *"appareil"* going over and over like a flat stone on the end of a string. Near it, gliding on its wing-tip, a similar bird; now dipping, now rising on its edge with the sun glistening the length of its *fuselage,* like a pickerel darting from the water. Just

a couple of Nieuports which have come from the station. They show they are in good form and not fatigued by the journey in doing a stunt or two before descending. This morning "bombardment," up at 3:30, still half dark. A few bright stars, the moon a silver crust with the suggestion of the whole moon outlined above. Flaming crests of cloud emerging from a dull blue bank. All over the field the screech of engines tuning up, then they run along the ground to the starting positions. Cannon factories are to be bombarded. Each group is by itself. One by one they run along the ground and off into space. Five, seven, twelve, nineteen, twenty-six—I lose count. They keep going away towards the horizon and then circle overhead. A lull, no more going up; but from above comes the ceaseless buzzing like locusts in a wood. Seventy-one left altogether, they tell me, and one of our group has not come back. I am affected here as *mitrailleur,* and wait Cowdin's return.

Your loving
VICTOR.

Malzéville,
Friday, August 20, 1915.

Dear Alice: I was over-joyed and entranced to receive your delightful letter with the interesting enclosures. A day or so after I received my change of corps and was sent here to Nancy, I found myself in the Escadrille of Prince and Cowdin, as *mitrailleur* or *bombardier.* Both are away. Prince is said to be in the north with an Avion cannon, and Cowdin is in Paris presumably getting a new machine. It has been very dull here. I did not kick at once to be sent to a school to learn to pilot, as I had understood from Cowdin that one could learn at the Front, without being side-tracked for a considerable time

in the rear; and a little practical experience, I thought, would help me in any case. Well, neither of them has returned, and since a young Lieutenant turned up I was assigned to him and have made three or four trial flights. I have written to Prince and Cowdin; but evidently I've not their address. So I have written to Paris to find out the state of affairs. This morning, having put the letter in the box, I leisurely came over from the tent where we sleep, to the aeroplanes. There was to have been, at six o'clock, bomb-dropping practice. My arrival was heralded by shouts, "*Dépêche-toi! Le Capitaine t'appelle.*" The latter called me over and said that since I made such a face about not being allowed to go with the Russian Lieutenant the other day, would I like to take Parran's mechanic's place and go on the big raid on the Imperial Palace at Trèves. "*Je ne demande pas mieux.*" "You know how to load the 155 and the use of the sighting machine?" "Yes." So they bundled me up in overshoes and fur coats, rammed a *passe-montagne* and a *casque* on my head, and led me over to the spot where the machines were already lined up. I cranked the motor and watched the machines before us depart at intervals of fifteen seconds. Sixty left in all, so I am told. But I forgot to explain to you that this corps is for nothing but bombardments, and they are all Voisins here, except two or three Nieuports to chase Aviatics if they come to Nancy. The *appareil* before us left, and we bounced over the ground and glided off the plateau. The weather was clear, few clouds, only near the ground were bits of mist looking like the wool which sticks to a dark suit after one has been lying on a bed. Our route was not to go straight across the lines at Pont-à-Mousson, but passing by way of Toul, Commercy, and St. Mihiel to cross the *ligne de feu* north of Verdun, and thence, a direct course

to Trèves. You don't know what it looks like to be in an aeroplane with the land of France below; its woods cut with straight edges and the patch quilt of cultivated land in tiny rectangles. The French like to make everything in straight lines, and this well-populated region shows the effect. We gained a good altitude over the forest between Nancy and Toul—12 to 1800 metres; but I began to find more and more fuzzy clouds in the low lands and river valleys. West of Toul, where we crossed the Meuse and followed it, the north wind became very strong; but below us the banks of mist became thicker and thicker. North of Commercy we lost sight of the earth altogether under two layers of clouds, one sticking like a blanket to the earth, and another flowing under us. It was like Alice in Wonderland, where one had to run very fast to stay in the same place. The view ahead and on the east side was like snow-fields of soft wet snow, with here and there hillocks rising in it with blue shadows. The sun shone full upon us, and looking down I could see our faint shadow on the filmy veil of moving clouds surrounded by sometimes one, often two rainbows, which formed a complete circle. Before us ever bobbed and dipped other *appareils*. Sometimes one saw only three or four, sometimes fifteen or more. Oddly we appeared always to fly steadily in a straight line, yet the other planes flitted from side to side and dipped below one another. Now and then, in the crevices between the clouds, we saw bits of trenches, for inadvertently, we had crossed the salient. Trenches from above, with their *boyaux*, look like the worn furrows one sees on dead tree trunks when the bark is removed.

Then we began to notice that all the aeroplanes before us veered off to the west, and I suddenly saw a ball of white smoke which I afterwards learned

was the signal to return because of unfavorable weather. There was a rift in the clouds just where we wheeled and the German gunners must have noticed us, for they sent several shrapnel shells up. One gets such an enormous feeling of space, having nothing definitely near one, that those little puffs of smoke looked pitiably inadequate and ill placed. Twenty odd planes I counted distinctly before me at the turning point. We fled south, always with the other machines flitting before, and got our bearings again by seeing ground and the big double curve that the Meuse makes by St. Mihiel, with a canal like a bow-string across it. It was far less foggy to the south. We passed over Void and were flying lower as we neared Toul. Toul itself looks like an ancient walled town. At any rate it has a fringe of trees all round it which slopes down to the river's edge on two sides, narrow intricate streets and red roofs with a big twin-towered cathedral emerging from the *place,* like a picture of similar edifices on bad maps of Paris. Again the forest with its edges as though cut by a scissors, and straight lines of roads traced across it. Odd, the roads in the open wind all over creation, but on entering the woods they go straight as an arrow as though to form prearranged geometrical patterns. Nancy, a great irregular cluster of houses, is easily recognized by the two great cones of iron ore *débris* south of the town near the river. They must be very large for they look as large as a city block,—one is black, the other white. Then, taking a dip, we sailed down to the aviation field with its white tents and numerous aeroplanes looking like so many white moths pinned on a green background. As we drew near and I saw the trees and suburban gardens on a large scale, it came upon me how very much greener they were getting. The little willows and the tall grass by the

very crooked little stream just sparkled in emeralds and sapphires when seen from 2000 metres (that's a mile and a quarter).

I started this to Uncle Willy, but suddenly remembered that everything was opened on entering Switzerland, and the names here given are perhaps of military importance. I hope to go on another raid tomorrow if the weather is fine. I have done not a little *mitrailleuse* practice lately, otherwise it is very dull here.

My best love to all.

Your loving
VICTOR.

Malzéville, August 24, 1915.

August 25, 1915.

Dear Conrad: Yesterday I made my first successful raid into Germany. It has been put off so long that it was judged best to change the place. However, yesterday morning we lined up the machines for a start. At the other end of the plateau the machines were following each other into the air when—zu-zz-bung! The signal for a German aeroplane, and then we noticed smoke balls in the sky. The little "75" on the field began to speak, and then above us running fast, though at a great height, soared an Aviatic. Four black puffs of smoke ballooned out successively across the field,—the last one landing well among the sheds. The Boche turned off and vanished.

At last we were off and, following the Meurthe river southeast, we quickly passed over St. Nicholas and shortly reached the *rendez-vous* above the village of Gerbevillier where we circled round and round to get our height and await the others. Height, you know, is a great security, for the greater distance you are up the more chance you have, if your motor

stops, not to land on a forest, or, in this case, behind the German lines. With 22 to 2600 metres and head wind one can sail a good way. Prince, I believe, made 26 kilometres. Our group (about twenty), continued to circle round. I began to wonder if they were squealing that the weather was unfavorable. There was a slight haze which, dropping a little above the horizon a shimmering white to the south fading into an opaque purple at the north, hid the details of the farther landscape and revealed unwillingly the nearer. Yet directly below it always seemed clear enough.

Keeping my eyes on the Captain's taxi I saw a white ribbon of smoke,—the starting signal. It reminded me of a trotting race and "They're off!" after the half-hour's jockeying round and round. It was now nearly eight and we took our course about 15° east of north. (Get a map if you can and follow.) Leaving Lunéville to westward we crossed successively the Meurthe, Vezouse and Sanon, and I became interested in a muddy lake north of the Marne-Rhine canal. Lakes are the best landmarks. We were right over firing lines now. Roads branched out into numerous paths and these became wormholes,—the *boyaux* and trenches. The spotty little villages showed often no red roofs, only gray walls. I remember Arracourt—very easy to spot because it lies entirely along one great street, hardly a bit of brick red left. Now we were not only in the German lines, but in German territory. The puffs of white smoke to the right and left of the "cuckoes" ahead showed we were noticed. Ah, to the north a big pond, Linden Wethof. By it the town of Dieuze, a railroad (I'm getting so I can recognize them now. They always look grayer in comparison to the yellow highways, and have less sharp turns), and *château* —Salins to the west.

We crossed the railroad and here I noticed a town with German influence. Yes, one end of it the typical huddle of roofs, but to the east bunches of trees separating the houses, and then bigger houses and courts—barracks! of course; but my! there were lots of them in Mörchingen. "Wind coming from northeast," I told the Lieutenant on a piece of paper, judging from the ripples on Bordi-Wether, a splendid lake to recognize because of three prongs to the south. St. Val and the forest we passed over, and then the Lieutenant jogged me to make a sighting so as to get our speed for dropping the projectile. Placing the sights successively at the spots marked for the height we were (2400 metres) I took two views of the same object, keeping the time with a stop watch (31 seconds) and by this means get the spot on the curve of my projectile for that height. We must be nearing the spot for the Lieutenant motioned me to load the projectile. This is by far the most difficult operation, for the 155 shell with its tin tail looking like a torpedo four feet long, is hung under the body and without seeing its nose even one has to reach down in front of the pilot, put the *detonateur* in, then the *percuteur* and screw it fast. After which I pulled off a safety device. You may imagine how I scrambled round in a fur coat and two pair of leather trousers and squeezed myself to get my arm down the hole. I really had a moment's nervousness that the *detonateur* would not stay in the hole but fly back into the *hélice*. However, all went well and the Lieutenant handed me the plan of the town of Dillingen where there were said to be huge casting works. Bad map it was and I got nothing out of the inaudible explanation and gestures. We were just passing over the river Saar by Pachten. Everything on the detail map was red. I still have scruples about dropping on dwelling houses—they might be Alsa-

tians. Right under us was a great junction of railway lines, tracks and sidings. "That's a go," I thought, and pulled the handle when it came in the sighter. A slight sway and below me the blue-gray shell poised and dipped its head. Straight away and then it seemed to remain motionless. Pretty soon its tail began to wag in small circles and then I lost sight of it over some tree-tops. "Pshaw," I thought, "there it's going to fall on its side, and into a garden. *Tant pis!*" When all at once, in the middle of the railroad tracks a cloud of black smoke which looked big even from that height. The Lieutenant said afterwards that I rocked the whole ship when I saw where it had fallen!

We turned to the south and setting myself back on my collapsible seat I drew out some chocolates and fed some to the Lieutenant. The wind behind us, now we were running along, I found difficulty in keeping it on the map. We crossed two railroad lines, that was Bolchen, and giving a berth to Metz on account of its guns, headed toward the lines at Nomeny. There before us were sixteen Voisins, and there ought to be a Nieuport or two to protect us from those Boche hawks. Some were quite near and the glint of their propellers shone, when on closer inspection the nearest propeller was hardly turning. The aeroplane sunk lower and lower and disappeared below us. White puffs of smoke to our right and left announced random shots at us. There was Pont-à-Mousson, and below us again finely engraved trench patterns with every little knoll and wood's edge fortified by the zigzag pattern. The river-valley lay ahead, the railroads and factories and Nancy behind the plateau. Swinging lower over the western woods we re-crossed the river and glided onto the plateau. Ten forty-five and we had only left at seven o'clock.

From a good altitude the country looks like nothing so much as a rich old Persian carpet. Where the fields are cultivated one sees the soil now a rich pinky red fading into a light yellow, or running into dark browns. The green fields, oblong patches and the brick-roofed villages like figures on the carpets connected by threads of roads and rivers; superposed upon it here and there in big and little patches—always with straight edges—are the woods, a dull, darkish green, for they are pine woods. In the direction of the sun the bits of water shine silver. In the opposite direction they are blue, but the darkest objects to be seen,—making the woods seem pale in contrast.

Show this letter to Papa and Dear Ma. There were said to have been seventy who left yesterday,—only two lost. One man was killed and two wrecked by the Aviatic.

Your loving
VICTOR.

Picardy, northwest of Amiens,
September 5, 1915.

Dear Alce: All the past week we have been changing domicile. Monday packing everything, Tuesday morning the last finishing touches—as heaving tents and personal belongings all into the autos and *ramorques*. No train, no orders. Wednesday came and went, also Thursday. Finally Friday morning we started for the station and put all the trucks on flat cars, and left that evening. Arrived here, S. P. 102, near St. Paul-en-Tennoise this morning. I did not have so bad a journey, having found the *ramorque* (trailer) with our luggage, and lay out comfortably reading the New York Times and London Times Editorials, gifts from Uncle Willy and Mr. Jaccaci respectively. Finally I became too

saturated and pulled out Emerson, and really got started in on "Great Men." At intervals I ate and divided with a couple of *mécaniciens, patées* and sausages. Here I am again back in Picardy; same flat country, same villages with their hedges and horse ponds, one-storey houses and muddy streets. No, the inhabitants are not so cordial or forthcoming as in the eastern provinces. For instance, the last night in Malzéville I decided that I would *not* sleep out on the open on the plateau, so after dinner in a little *auberge* I tried to beat up a hole. It was nine o'clock and pitch dark. (No street lamps.) The girl of the café got information of a room in one side street. She went ahead yelling the good woman's name. Blinds went up, woman's head popped out: *"Militaire qui veut un lit pour la nuit."* Down they come, two of them, they suggest this house, try that,—find a bed but not the owner and go off on a wild hunt for the latter. Meanwhile the second lady I had routed out takes me into her kitchen and entertains me with conversation and anisette, till the owner of the spare bed is discovered at a friend's house. More anisette, healths, handshakes and a comfortable bed. How different from the tooth-extracting method I had to pursue this morning to get some rope for a hammock. "No, she only had string so much the kilo." But what's that behind the paper? "For hitching-ropes." While I was looking it over and taking fifty *sous'* worth she was actually grudging me the time, saying she had other things to do. The night's lodging at Malzéville incidentally was only a franc. Still the tile-roofed, white-washed mud homes here are charming and recall Hangest and other villages. On the whole this little village looks cleaner than the ones to the eastward which I am used to. Gray stone and brick gable ends. Clean, unimaginative colors almost like poster designs, so

different from the hazy pinks, violets and emeralds of the Nancy region.

I have the latest wrinkle now. It's a hammock, strung very tight and padded to sleep in. It comes in particularly well tonight, for no straw was given out. Back to barn life. One sees how picturesque it is after a month in tents. In fact, the soldier at the front is about the most picturesque animal I can think of, except perhaps an oriental beggar; and his psychology is peculiar. But we are so wrapped up in doing something, or in complaining how bored we are, that we don't think of it. It's like the attitude of the College undergraduate, inexplicable to anyone else. I can't go into it now for it's late and the last man has got into bed; but the soldier's joy is the getting of everything for nothing, and disregard for the value. Chop up tables and chairs to make fire for soup, one day, instead of looking farther, and be forced next week to construct the same most ingeniously from branches and small boxes.

Sunday, September 10, 1915.

Dear Alce: I was much moved by your letter on the wings of prayer. I could write oftener, I have the time and the inclination; but I find my thoughts run easily only on critical subjects.

I blazed away at a target with the *mitrailleuse* yesterday afternoon, and when we got through and came back to the tents I wandered off picking dandelions for salad, not that I eat it with relish but a fellow said he could make it excellent with sauce. The Avion cannons came over to practice on a target and a little captive balloon with some new variety of shell. Among them Prince, who returned from Paris that morning with another machine. I found him rushing round to get the springs on his "*aileron de profondeur*" strengthened before the shooting.

Everything is going to come out all right pretty soon. He is coming over this morning and we'll lunch together somewhere and patch up some scheme to get me taught at once. Perhaps there is a school-Farman on his field, and we could borrow it, while I would be designated to his machine as *aide-mécanicien* or the like. But *" il s'agit "* to fix it up with the authorities. The Commandant of this group is said to have an interest in the Voisin concern; however that may be he discourages demands for pilotages on every other machine. Prince says there are two Americans already at the Front in Nieuports and in a month or so the Escadrille will really be formed. It's being put off for the moment, because probably the first two are doing so well, and they are short of that type. Besides there are military operations, etc.

September 11, 1915.

Dear Chanler: Last night we had almost a feast with a large hare a fellow shot the other day, cooked by a large fat *Marseillais,* who claims to have once prepared a banquet for the Lord Mayor of London. In any case it was very good, for we scraped up a glassful of *Madeira* and some seasoning herbs. The pink-complexioned, orange-moustached Manieser had a long serious discussion with the Lord Mayor's cook and the mouldy little, ragged-bearded corporal, Duval, on new Russian victories and the imminent fate of Constantinople. I turned to listen to the gossip of the younger group at the other end of the table,—three long planks nailed on a barrel and lighted by a couple of candles and a home-made gasolene lamp. They are mostly of the class of *quinze.* A black-haired Breton, Putingnon, rather duller than the rest and therefore scorned, for he jumps into a conversation from the other end of the table, without really being aware what it is about, as *"Ça*

fait du bien, tout de même de manger la gamelle de temps en temps"—when they were talking of cheese.

There was Vincent, a little light-complexioned, smiling chap from the neighborhood of Nancy. It was he who rounded up the hare. Then, de Phillipon, a large black-eye-browed athletic,—I guess he is of the class 12 or 13 for he has been in the game since the beginning, and has even the *" croix de guerre."* He shot the hare. Bar-le-Duc, a white-faced, lantern-jawed Lillois, self-effacing, intelligent fellow, knows quite a bit of English. Incidentally he told me that de Phillipon destroyed his house in the suburbs of Lille, beside a railway station. The latter aimed at the station but hit the house. By escaped refugees it appeared to be a lucky shot, for it killed three German Commandants and thirty odd soldiers. Besides these come Millet, a pretty pink-cheeked boy, who got into the Aviation because his father supplied studded canvas to some aeroplane firm. He and his inseparable companion, a taller, more masculine type, have the hammocks which I copied, and supplied the stove for cooking the hare. Lastly there was the Dragon-ordinance of the Lieutenant, a short, stocky, blue-eyed fellow with seventeen hairs on each side of his nose carefully rolled together and pointed. Every one of these young men have moustaches, as every Frenchman should; but in most cases one has to look closely to discover it.

After remarking on the outrageous price of wine here—fifteen *sous* the *litre*—they turned to discussing the characters of the *Conducteurs* (auto drivers). I didn't follow the ins and outs, not knowing the names; but the general conclusion was they were *paysans* and, with one or two passable exceptions, unworthy of being associated with the *mécanos*. The party broke up,—Vincent playing a few sensational Parisian ditties on a broken-winded accordion.

The Lord Mayor's cook ponderously climbed the ladder into the hay loft, and I arranged my *peau de bique* (goat-skin coat to cover me in the hammock), and folded up my newspaper.

September 20, 1915.

Dear Papa: My demand went through. I go in two days to Avord, near Bourges. Poor hole, I hear. However, I shall learn to fly. The American end of it is coming on very well, Prince tells me. He is in a camp near by,—I took French leave and spent the day with him. He came over and hustled things along for me. Eight Americans at the Front and twelve training. Prince has permission for an unlimited number at the schools now and is very anxious to get as many as possible.

Camp d'Avord, Sept. 27, 1915.

Well, at last I was given my "*Ordre de Service*" and ticket to come here. I stopped off three days at Paris and saw Cowdin, Jaccaci, Hester, Laura and Kisling. Cowdin treated me like a brick, and the American Flying Corps will really go through after this attack. Cowdin has Barrès' word for it. With a letter from Prince, I had no difficulty getting into the Morane School,—the slowest and most difficult machine to learn on, but makes a better pilot. I find a compatriot I am proud to own here. A tall, lanky Kentuckian, called Rockwell. He got his transfer about a month ago from the *Légion*. He was wounded on the ninth of May, like Kisling. In fact one-half of the 2*me de Marche,* 2300, were wounded that day, not counting the killed and missing. He gives much the best account I have heard. Having charged with the third battalion and being wounded in the leg on the last *bouck,* he crawled back across the entire field in the afternoon.

At this moment I have mixed feelings of pride, envy and sorrow, for he has just received a postal from a friend who has returned to the Regiment. They were given a banner, and three days ago they were up where the big advance took place. On account of their reputation and the general understanding that they were reserved for attack, the regiment must have been in the very thick of it, and has enormous losses. Even Rockwell is chafing because he changed too soon. "There is nothing like it, you float across the field, you drop, you rise again. The sack, the 325 extra rounds, the gun—have no weight. And a ball in the head and it is all over,—no pain."

Avord, October 2, 1915.

Dear Alce: I am in the Morane School. This includes the baby Moranes, the Bleriots, the parasol Moranes and the Nieuports. All, save the last, are monoplanes. Now a monoplane is a more delicate apparatus to pilot than a biplane. Hence we go very much slower, but we end by learning more and being better pilots. In the Maurice Farman, a big biplane, one begins by the double-command-1913 model, sailing in the air with a monitor. One goes alone on the 1913, after which 1914-double-command. Then on the 1914 alone. All this is done in the air, and since the machine is big and a fine planer it responds slowly to the "commands" and is apparently easy to handle; but in an emergency one is not used to doing things fast, so trouble may follow. At Morane School I began on the baby and rolled and rolled, first dragging the tail, then with the tail elevated, and finally making little jumps. It looks like a big June bug or brown moth. Since it is made to go in the air it is extremely delicate to roll about the fields on, and the moment the tail ceases to be directly behind, it swings about in what they call

chevaux de bois (merry-go-rounds). Thus one gets a long time of practice in manipulating the commands, till they become second nature. We shall next move to a machine on which we take long leaps and bounds, then a big Morane or Bleriot, and finish on the Nieuport. The Test consists in three events:—to go up to 2000 metres and remain one hour; to make a *ligne droit* of 60 odd kilometres; and last, a triangle to Chartres and some other place, during which one " vol-planes " down 500 metres and lands in any field. I have taken eight spins of ten minutes each so far and still turn more often than I go straight.

Your loving
VICTOR.

Camp d'Avord, October 5, 1915.

Dear Papa: There is a Grotonian, Farnsworth, in the *Légion* and I cannot find out whether he is dead or alive. The *Légion* was practically wiped out on the 25th in Champagne. I have written to eight or ten fellows but have no answers as yet. Ames is wounded and in a hospital. Rockwell has letters from two wounded chaps. At any rate Farnsworth, though he may be considered a scapegrace by Groton, is more of a hero, dead or alive, than either Cowdin or myself; for as a common *poilu* he has been in a terrific modern attack.

My old Escadrille at the Front has been doing some work bomb-dropping, I hear. One of the observers was wounded by an *éclat* and a Pilot had his leg frozen. The German diplomats have put one over those of the Allies in the Balkans. Roumania won't start and Bulgaria has gone over to the enemy, I see. A fine letter that of Mr. Davison. I hope it was copied by the other papers. Very slow

this schooling is. Better to go slow than be killed, however.

Camp d'Avord, October 10, 1915.

Dear Alce: At last I am getting under way and beginning to learn to fly. Rose thought I had a hard hand and would do better to learn on a double-command Maurice Farman; so I enquired which was the most serious of the M. F. Schools and got permission from the *Commandant-de-Centre* to change. The engine had to be repaired in the D. C. '13, so I did not get started until day before yesterday, and I have flown about an hour and a quarter since. It is all a question of balance, as one stays upright in a canoe, or as one sails a boat, now yielding, now opposing; and, as is the case of a sailboat, the most difficult manœuvre is making a landing.

In the afternoon or late morning when one goes out, there are lots of little flaws in the air even if there is no wind. A constant slap, slap, or boosting up, or little unpleasant sinking feelings, sometimes in the middle or again on one side,—so that it is a constant preoccupation to be righting the balance and easing off the shocks. But in the evening (I went up last night about sundown), it is delicious. Never a waver. We sped on with even exactitude through the atmosphere as though we were gliding on a mirrored lake, the rich purple and crimson haze below and before. Having risen to 6 or 800 metres we descended with almost a dead engine in a spiral, and opened out again to glide on to the table land called the *piste*.

No, I have not got to that state of efficiency in which to cope with spirals yet; but I can cope with most of the landings.

Halloween—1915.

I get the idea that you—and Alce especially—are wearing yourselves out worrying and praying about the danger I am in, or were rather, when I was at the front, and will again when I return. It's all very parental and I appreciate it, but I wish you would not because it rather takes the edge off, and principally because it does not benefit me or anyone. This is the first thing I have ever done that has been worth while, or may ever do, and you might just as well get the benefit of it without the heart-wringing worry. It's a sin against herself to love to that extent,—to be so tender-hearted. Suppose I thought she was getting sick with worry, and deserted,—or even took a post as monitor at the school after I was *brevté* (quite an easy thing to do) and never returned to the front. I flatter myself to think that you both are getting a lot of fun out of this all the time, as you did in Paris last Summer, and perhaps see things and men you would not if I had not joined. Why not take the good and leave the bad? It is easier to pilot an aeroplane than drive an auto when you get on, and far less dangerous than the autoing I used to do daily at Cambridge.

November, 1915.

Dear Alce: For the last two weeks now nearly I have been leading a luxurious self-indulgent life. With a French marine named St. Maurice I have a room in a court in a tiny village near the field. The great luxury of soft beds and sheets has been such that combined with the enormous quantity of fresh air we have, nothing can keep us awake after dinner. We rise at about 5:30, cook chocolate and often meat, then go up to the field at dawn. Returning about dusk we set about making a fire, and having stopped at the butcher on the way down, we proceed

to concoct an excellent dinner. Our patron, you must know, has a grocery shop so we just drop in and buy things as we need them. Once a week she has fine fresh oysters straight from the sea, and in the cellar is some wine, nothing wonderful, but six or eight years old and for twenty-five *sous* it is remarkable. The great drawback is that I seem to find no time to write or even to read. As is always the case we pass our time standing round on the field, and do little or nothing besides talking. I finally was released from double command and with four others had an antediluvian '13 model *appareil* all to ourselves. Luckily the engine was not old and gave us little trouble. But its whole appearance was that of the one-horse shay on the centenary of the earthquake day. "It holds together because it has the habit," was the opinion among us *élèves*. Whenever I changed a piano-cord I felt that I ought to get a thin rusty one so as not to over-balance or insult it. Day before yesterday it died in harness, and just as completely as the shay. One of the little tail rudders is the only distinguishable feature. The rest is *débris* in the general outline of an aeroplane. The imprint or phantom of an *appareil* was what made me recognize the spot as I flew over it yesterday. It wasn't the fault of age, that accident however. The poor fellow driving it *piqué'd* from some 300 metres and came down vertically. Not a thing to do with biplanes—they get "engaged" and it is very difficult to change their direction,—so he collided with the earth. It makes me a little reticent about telling you, for you say it might just as well have been me. I did *piquer* a bit steep on it the evening before. But I am past that danger now. Besides I have moved on to the '14 model machines which are newer and far more responsive to handle. Your loving

VICTOR.

Avord, December 6, 1915.

Dear Alce: I flew this afternoon—quite a rare occurrence during these few last weeks. It was clear weather for a wonder,—at least the sun shone out between the beaten clouds, and a stiff breeze was blowing. "*Ça draillonne énormement,*" said the fellow, as he got out of the body, when finally I had my turn, "*et le gauchissement ne répond pas. Regarde comme c'est mou!*" and he twanged the twisted wire cable. I buckled the strap round my hips. "*Ça va!*" he shouted to tell me there were no Avions coming up behind and I opened the gas and started off into the wind. The machine left the ground almost immediately and I had to hold it down to keep headway. Then it began to buck, squirm and wriggle. It slid off to the right, to the left, took a short plunge downward and then attempted to rear. The earth, a scrawny tree or two, looked near and menacing, but the *gauchissement* responded very well. As I gained a little height (75–100 metres) I felt more at home. "My! what a pleasure to see the mountains again after that monotonous plain." For, from a little height, already the slightly variegated horizon stood out a deep rich blue. It added the necessary contrast to bring out the soft silver grays and hazy browns of the land with the baby blues and faint pinks of the sky and clouds. My thoughts were interrupted by a *ratté* or two of the engine, and I gave a casual glance at the field under me—in case the engine should stop and I must come down. Heading towards the artificial village of artillery, I was skirting the edge of the camp without advancing at all. Slowly it seemed I was moving sidewise always facing the sinking sun. "I never saw that before," thought I. In the valley before me the little stream had flooded the low ground, and there, depicted in the little patches of water were the

pinky, pale-blue clouds. I turned and swooped along with the wind. The buffeting was much less now, merely a rise and fall like a ground swell, and the land was racing by underneath. Here were big areas of hardwood forests,—gray individual trees sticking up all over out of rich copper-colored foliage. The foolish little winding creek with poplars like spear heads stuck along its course. A funny little house with yellow gravel and lawn about it. Then, a pasture and patchwork of cultivated fields. These looked like handsome well-worn carpets with the warp shown up in places, green against gray. Now I leaned hard to the right and came back into the wind, heading to the ten little match boxes (the M. F. hangars) where white bits of paper were ranged about. When I seemed about near enough I shut off the engine and pointed down, and but for the strap would have been lifted out of the seat by the sharpness of my descent. I pulled it over to the right, then eased it, and in my intentness actually stopped humming some innocent air. The ground, the shrubs and the grass came up, up, for I was just above the ground. The machine lost its momentum and sank down. I must post this. Best love till another day.

Your loving
VICTOR.

Avord, Jan. 6, 1916.

Dear Alice: Hall, an American who has been flying in Cowdin's Escadrille, is here as monitor for a month's rest. He is a thin-faced, keen-looking fellow. I have a letter from Uncle Willy; he is at Paris (25 Champs Élysées), I suppose you know, and is having a rush order put through on his wooden leg. I am now enjoying the companionship (and

care) of a small black and white puppy. It just dropped in and stayed one night, and since it has a good head and is clean, besides being coveted by my friends, I keep it. The horrible thought has now come to me that it may grow to the size of a St. Bernard!

I enjoy Papa's article on Wilson hugely, and relish the Tribunes which he often sends me; it really keeps me a bit in touch with America, even at three weeks old. I'm much pleased and interested to see T. R. being pushed by events to the front.

January 7.

My, this seems an empty, selfish letter. However, I suppose you wanted to know what I was doing.

Oh, by the way, would you pick out one of the best of those souvenirs or trinkets and send it to Bishop as a kind of Xmas or Easter present. Whatever you think the most interesting, except, of course, the German bomb which belongs to Papa.

Your loving
VICTOR.

Hotel Crillon, Paris,
January 18, 1916.

Dear Alce: Well, I got my *brevet* a week or ten days ago. Most unfavorable weather conditions, but still I was the first to be *brevté* in January. Since coming here I have rushed about and seen half a dozen varieties of people. From Duffours and Bianchi, through Kisling, the St. Maurices, right up to M. Boutroux and M. Breteuil. Finally on Saturday, I met Cowdin and Prince who had just arrived. I lunched with them on Sunday in Company with some big guns in French and American aviation, and then returned to Avord only to get my marching orders to the R. G. A. Yesterday the Princes took

me to lunch with the Commandant Belaut who is in charge of all the new machines that are supplied to the Army. After lunch we went out to Issy le Moulineau where the new model improvements and readjustments are tried out. They surpass the imagination. There were three or four models of great size for a competition, each about 28 metres from tip to tip with three huge motors; one could carry enough gasolene to go to Berlin and back. Also a little humming-bird car, which climbs to 3500 metres in the incredible time of 14 minutes! It looks as though we can put the Am. Aviation through this deal. All those who were indifferent are now more sympathetic. Besnard appointed a Lieutenant in his office to look out for our interests.

Hotel Crillon, Paris,
January 21, 1916.

Dear Alce: Up and down, back and forth. Yesterday we understood the American Escadrille was formed and we were to be united today. We plugged about at Bourget and found the *Capitaine du Reserve General d'Aviation,* who said he knew nothing of it and sent us off to our respective groups,—Thaw to Caudron, Cowdin to Nieuport, Prince to Voisin, and myself to Maurice. That means Prince and I have to go to some God-forsaken village near Senlis and wait till the order comes through—if it does—, and the ministry does not fall as it did last autumn when all had been arranged.

Now I just drop in on Jaccaci and meet a young Aviation Lieutenant, who is on Maurice and invites me to go on his Escadrille in three or four days' time when he is back at the Front. "We need pilots," he says, "and I'd rather take you than people I've never heard of. Don't you want to come?" Don't I? Have a machine to myself, fly all I want! But

I cannot throw the American business over-board at this time.

I am dining with Cowdin, Prince, and the rest.

Your loving
VICTOR.

February 15, 1916.

Dear Alce: . . . I am mildly bored as usual out here for I have not flown or rolled on a machine for over two weeks. The weather is one round of rain and wind. On the two or three fine days the Moranes were smashed up. However, I talk and think flying so much with Norman Prince that I feel I am learning just the same. I am really expert in the pilotage of the Nieuport.

I hear young William James, the artist, is in town,—will try to see him. Love to Papa.

Your loving
VICTOR.

Division Nieuport,
February 20, 1916.

Dear Chanler: After waiting about some three weeks now I have at last got a whack at the machines. I was not sure I could get away with it, having never been in a parasol before; but it went splendidly and I landed well. The next fellow, as I remember, broke it up, so I was put on Nieuport, and, knowing that all the risk that I ran was a *capotage* in landing or leaving, I pulled on the motor full force and sailed away. It is a beautifully balanced machine and responds in a twinkling to the commands. Besides one has a great feeling of security and strength in its robust form and powerful motor. My! it is heavy for its size. To land well one must let it fall from about a yard and a half, taking care that the tail is well down at the time.

This afternoon (the second time I have flown it, my progress being greatly impeded by numerous *capotages* on the part of my class-mates)—I tried some banked curves (*virages à la vertical*). Of course I had understood beforehand how it was done, yet the experience was a novel and almost uncomfortable sensation because I am not accustomed to it. I never did much of this while learning on the M. F., because it is such a big 'bus that 45° seems an awful lot; but, on the Nieuport, if you don't bank on the sharp curves it's so small it slides outward and the side wind is most unpleasant. The tail flippers of this fish has, like any other aeroplane, a rudder for direction, and a movable plane for depth. But of course if it is turned over side-wise it is the rudder which serves as depth and the *plan de profondeur* as direction. The first time, I put my hand over for direction, and then, as it keeled round, pulled on the *manche à ballage*. Ordinarily this would make the boat go up, but here, you see, it pulled the nose inward. It came over so fast that I wanted to climb on to the upper side of the *fuselage*. So I straightened out and righted. Not having reduced the motor—good precaution to diminish disagreeable sensations—I had the feel of the air working hard on the upper wing surfaces by the increased speed. I *piqué'd* a little to straighten out. It's just the sucking tension, or resistance, a sail that has fallen overboard gives, and one takes it in with headway. The landing does not seem to me to be as hard as I was led to believe. I don't say I won't *capoter:* everyone does some time or other. Even the Captain took out the new Hispano today and made a summersault before leaving the ground,—wheels stuck in the ground. Whee! but there is mud out here. Imagine a level ground a mile and a half long by a mile broad, some of it planted in winter wheat, but some

merely ploughed and harrowed. With the rain, or the occasional inch of snow, it becomes a wonderful, cold, sticky consistency. Even the two or three little dogs who stand about with the *pilotes* can be seen holding one little paw up after another to warm it.

On windless days the *penguin* or *trois pattes* wanders about. It is a Morane with a three cylinder engine. Everybody takes an interest in it for the amusement it affords. Never yet have I heard of a man who did not, on his first start, make half-a-dozen *chevaux de bois,* like a kitten chasing its tail. Yesterday, or was it the day before?—a fellow started out famously, tail up straight as a dart; when he wavered and made a whirlwind of circles. Slowing the engine, he stopped, and made a fresh start. This time he was so violent that the machine ended up with its nose in the ground and its tail pointed heavenwards. The whole *personnel* had gathered, for everyone knew beforehand that this would end that very frisky behavior, while the poor fellow climbed down from his uncomfortable position in the *fuselage.* The number of machines in active service in this school has been greatly reduced. One day ten were broken and there never are less than three *capotages* a day.

Your loving
VICTOR.

Division Nieuport, Feb. 21, 1916.

Dear Alice: At last I am in a better frame of mind and can write you a more exhaustive letter on our situation. For the last two-and-a-half weeks I have been out here (1½ hours from Paris) waiting to fly, and incidentally following, or rather taking, a strong advisory part in the preparation for our future welfare.

Well, finally Sunday morning it was fine and not

windy. By saying strongly enough, "Why, of course I can fly the parasol!" (a Morane monoplane with the plane over-head) I was given permission to climb in: the other pupils in my class had broken it on the previous occasion. The *mécano* whirled the *hélice* and I sped down the field. It was glorious! I had not flown for nearly a month. But the excess of power, I was not accustomed to: I did not feel that I had the machine in hand. However, I made three or four *virages*. It responds delightfully, easily, and reducing the motor I came towards the field. "It seems a shame to smash up such an elegant bird," I thought, for the landing is the crucial moment. But—*je me suis bien débrouillé*,—and came down like a feather. I had a passenger-ride on Nieuport, and yesterday afternoon took a turn on the large variety called *le* 23 metre, meaning it has 23 square metres of *surface portant*. One certainly gets plenty of wind in it, especially on the turns, if the motor is not reduced; and it responds so quickly and easily that I pushed the stick about with my little finger. After the Farman, it's like sailing a swift little race-boat when one has been used to something on the order of the "Wild Duck." In a moment I was at 100 metres and nearly lost the field. I turned, circled and finally landed in the far end of the field. With a bounce, to be sure; but that's a detail, for I was immensely satisfied. "Who in the deuce has been putting into my head that the Nieuport is so difficult, so dangerous?" I thought, "it's just like any other machine as long as you're careful—only better." And yet it's called the *casse gueule*. People are not careful, however. This morning I did not go out, for my *zingue* was smashed, and this afternoon it's rain, snow and wind. But to return to the other end of the matter, there are six of us ready to go to the front now, including myself. Barrès has promised

to give us all the Bébé Nieuports (we do not buy anything) and we shall be an *Escadrille de chasse*. N. B. Up to now there have been no *Escadrille* of *Bébés*, these being generally only given to old *pilotes*. Now we must have a French Captain. But first, as to the people who are running this. They are, of course, the three you know,—Thaw, Cowdin and Prince. Thaw, though the youngest, has perhaps more weight, being a *sous*-Lieutenant. Thaw wants his old chief at his Caudron Escadrille, *Capitaine* Thenault, a charming fellow, but young. Balsan, after being asked to look into the matter, gave some uncertain answer. Thaw wants him if it's physically possible. Meanwhile we wait, and if nothing is done, we greatly fear that Thenault may be definitely refused us and some "service" *Capitaine* be dumped upon us to make our life unpleasant.

Your loving
VICTOR.

Plessis, March 23, 1916.

Dear Papa: I was over-joyed to get your letters. They came all in a bunch. On the strength of what you said about M. Chevrillon I went out and lunched with him yesterday,—a very charming family affair. He showed me some of his works of art, especially the Chinese and Japanese paintings and little objects. He has such a sympathy for them that he made me swell with enthusiasm. Delicious little carved toad buttons. They quite took the edge off his two or three French eighteenth century masters in the "*gute stube.*" He sends his kindest regards and pointed out to me with pride that he had two or three of your books in the Holy of Holies,—a little bookshelf beside his bed.

. . . Here at Plessis I have been flying the "baby." (Alce wanted to know what I meant.)

The Nieuport machines are all much smaller and faster than the Farmans and Voisins, etc. The Bébé is the smallest and latest model. It is a monoplane and is said to be the fastest in the French Army. It is a most delightful machine and responds so quickly and precisely. Can you figure moving at will in three dimensions? Well, Monday I went out for the fifth time on it, and climbing to 1000 metres I looped the loop a couple of times. Now for a really good *atterrissage,* I thought, as I approached the ground, and began gauging my distance. I got over the spot just right and all would have been well *but* I was careless with the "*mamette des gaz*" and the shock of the landing started the motor, so I bounced off and bent a wing before stopping it. I never felt a sicker man than when I trudged over to the waiting group. "A clear case of over-confidence," they said, and cursed me for breaking it. For it will take a couple of days to repair. Don't let this be an occasion for you and Alce to write me: "*Please* be careful." It's the first bad smash I've made and I have six months pilotage now. Also the far-famed looping is much easier than for a street boy to make a hand-spring. *Nothing* to it.

Your loving
VICTOR.

Luxeuil les Bains,
April 20, 1916.

Dear Alce: Off at last! I got a batch of very cheery home letters from you, Papa, and Grandmamma which I read on the train going out Monday night, after a kind of wind-up dinner of Americans. We travelled all night in a *ravitaillement* train, and arrived finally at a little hillside village, with a glimpse of Reims cathedral amid the rolling Champagne slopes. There we found some one had made

a mistake, so we were directed to Luxeuil. We passed through a suburb of Reims by auto and spent the night at Epernay. Plenty of inhabitants and children playing in the streets at Reims, only the roads have cloth screens running for miles on their northern sides, so that the Germans may not see the traffic. The country everywhere is beautiful, at this season especially. All the next day by train we followed the Marne till it became a creek no bigger than the Motherkill, and without missing trains at the changes—most lucky—reached Lure, where we met the Captain. I should have said we—means Norman, Rockwell, McConnell and myself. Thaw and Cowdin are coming later. The Captain took us to the field, a fine one with numerous huge hangars and cabins in construction—more like grain elevators or shipping docks than anything I have yet seen. There we were introduced to Captain Happe. The latter is a by-word in aviation, and incredible are the stories told about him and his *bombardement escadrilles.* In the twilight of his shack, scenting of new cut spruce, he welcomed us all, and standing before the window, delivered an impromptu lecture on the advantages of accompanying bombardment machines. "I know *escadrille de chasse* do not like to accompany us; but it is my belief that they would find more game if they did. Now if you had been with us on my last trip I should not have this sorry task," and he waved his hand to the table where lay a neat pile of yellow envelopes looking like boxes of wedding cake. "*Croix de guerre* and letters to the relatives of the eight fellows killed on my last raid." I thought his eye glittered as he related the satisfaction of his last victim. I believe he prides himself on having lost as many *pilotes* as any other two Captains in France. Anyway we have no fear, for he has been forbidden to cross the line except by night, until he is

given new and faster machines, by which time we shall be called elsewhere. Near our cabin-bureau we found the autos of our *escadrille* which gave us a tangible idea of the realization of our hopes. Motor busses and trucks with gray bodies and brass head lights were lined along the field. I think there were twenty, counting two *voitures légères*.

We are finely situated in this *ville-d'eaux*—eat at the best hotel in town with our officers, live in a "*villa*" on the hill with an ordnance to clean up, and bathe and drink hot waters. Meanwhile we wait for the Avions to be shipped. I would you were here to enjoy the countryside, the blossoming fruit trees, and the distant snow-capped hills. The town is old and picturesque—*Maison du Cardinal Jouffroy—Maison de François I*, etc. And this morning I saw a stork circling round and round. In a couple of days we shall have an order to circulate in the autos and a *baby* or two to practice. What an ideal chance for sight-seeing in the neighborhood, if only soldiers took an interest in history and architecture. But they don't. McConnell says he finds the war quite a fashionable pastime. He winters at Pau, stops off a week or two at Paris, and now, just as the season begins, goes to the summer resort.

Your loving
VICTOR.

Luxeuil, April 30, 1916.

Dear Papa: I have just received two splendid letters from you,—one about Chanler and the other about the war and its prospects. As to the latter, one is inclined to think that five years more is stretching it, because of the scarcity of materials and eatables. Here, as usual, I spend a care-free idle life, hoping and wishing and worrying about that which does not arrive. In this case, the aeroplanes. We have, how-

ever, made two beautiful trips in the Vosges. On the first it was still raining, so we were not able to get the full benefit of the scenery. At Belfort we nearly had a calamity for it was discovered that the Captain's playful wolf dog had chewed up the official red paper pass which allowed us to circulate. It was, however, patched together and glued on celluloid; so we continued, passed the " de Belfort," stopping at the various aviation fields, and continued into the reconquered Alsace. German names on the sign posts and in the walls; but bunches of French troops and little placards *" cave 30 hommes," " cave 50 hommes," " 4me Escadron"* etc. The main road here was barred by day being in sight of the enemy. (I should also say at every village were toll gates with sentinels who took our number, etc.) we therefore made a detour into the foothills,—mighty precipitous they were—and descended into Thann. All the eastern side of the Vosges seems to drop *" à picque "* into the Rhine basin, while on this side they rise very gently. We wound among vineyards and broom and were only bored because the pretty views of valleys with blossoming cherry trees and the distant Harts forest were perpetually cut off by artificial screens (to hide us from the Germans). I should have liked to stop and wander in Thann but the Captain wanted to get home. It is such a picturesque town full of *chasseurs-à-pieds,* cyclists, etc., besides the inhabitants, speaking the German *patois.* The signs written in German, crossed out or patched up into French. Lots of women and children despite the marked signs of bombardment in the main street. We climbed slowly up the valley, and passed into two or three small villages, noting little green patches of flat land.

The little railways soon stopped, and we met *camions* and horse teams toiling up the curved road, now hedged in by a tall spruce forest. There is even

an air line (buckets swinging on cables) over the mountain to facilitate the *ravitaillement*. Passing through a tunnel—the ancient boundary—we came out to the French water-shed and the source of the Moselle. Little white houses squatting on the slopes, with hillocks rising behind. It was very striking how unlike the two sides were. The eastern with its jagged summits and ridges standing out in bare brown rock, and the western with its rounded off and entirely wooded slopes. We had thought of returning by the Ballon d'Alsace; but the snow, of which we now saw patches, deterred us. Rolling gently down from one valley to another we soon reached broader meadows again, with cherry trees to Luxeuil.

Yesterday we went to attend the funeral of a *pilote*. We went to Gerardmer and thence on to lunch with an *escadrille* in a nearby town. It was an even more delightful trip, principally perhaps because it was a very fine day and we had no top on the motor to spoil the view. First the low lands and foothills, with the white fruit trees and buttercups everywhere; then the narrow valleys with little streams, gray trees budding on new leaves, and finally Gerardmer Lake with fir covered hills coming down to the water's edge. Lots of swagger aviation officers with glittering decorations, and a fiery young Alpine Lieutenant who marshalled his demi-section of sallow youths about the bier. It was a short, impressive ceremony in the little grave-yard on a side hill, and once over, we continued to the nearby flying corps. We lunched—messed, I suppose I should say—with the officers there, and scrumptious food we had, the proprietor of one of the best-known restaurants at Geneva being the cook, we were told. Cigarettes, *liqueurs*, a view of the *champs*—very small—and the latest model Farman, which had fresh bullet holes from the morning's

encounter. And we returned. We took another route, leading through the Val-d'Ajol, very noted, I believe, for its gorge-like sides. Little yellow jonquils and some blue flowers covering every grassy slope.

April 30.

As though to aggravate our chagrin at not having the 'planes, the Boche came all the way over and dropped bombs on our field. It is 65 kilometres back, so with half a chance we could catch him before he returned. The first day he killed one of our auto drivers, but since then he has done no damage, though he dropped incendiary bombs on the hospitals this morning. Our little 75 blazes away at him at dawn when he comes, and we hang out of the windows of our *villa* on the hill, and discuss his approximate height. There was a big funeral, of course, for the poor *poilu,* which lasted hours in church, and all of Luxeuil turned out. "It must have cost a lot to have such a mass," the lady of the café told us afterwards. "The state and the *service de santé* bear the expense."

By the way, *please* get those photos I took of Farnsworth and Sokona and send them to Mrs. Alfred Loomis, Tuxedo Park.

I often wonder what this game of mine is leading to. Nothing but a dyed-in-the-wool ne'er do weel, I suspect. All war is a tumbling down of the established order. Yes, I have a paint box; but somehow I was awfully diffident and finicky the last time I tried.

Love to all.

Your loving
VICTOR.

Luxeuil, May 10, 1916.

Dear Alce: I have just received a delayed lot of splendid letters from home. The Great Robbery

among others. It seems as though we came in for all the glory without a great loss. It substantiates splendidly your theory about not having real silver about. Rockwell foamed at the mouth when I read him what Papa said on the Morlae subject. "That's just the point, he did not write a word of the article. The —— can't even talk English correctly, let alone write it! The story is a most inaccurate jumble of what happened the winter of 1914 at ." It appears I gave him too much credit, he has not even the *croix de guerre*.

Well, the Avions have arrived: the first batch came by train the latter part of last week, and the second, among which was mine, on Sunday night. All yesterday was taken up in mounting and adjusting. This morning I took my maiden voyage. Amazing little things (you would call them big perhaps, because one takes up more room than a couple of limousines; but, as compared to an average aeroplane, which needs a circus tent for shelter, they are small) and so neat and clean-limbed, the eight of them do not half fill up one shed. Most of them have war paint on,—rather handsome, savage without being garish. It is mottled light and dark brown with light and dark green imitation of landscape, the same type that they paint *camions,* tents, cannons, etc. Mine, however, happens to be a cream-color solid, something new they are trying out; but it gets dirty and needs to be washed daily. The tools for the mechanics have arrived, so we are all right except for spare parts, of which we have plenty to be sure, but none fit, as they are for the old model Nieuport. It seemed almost odd to be in air again: in fact I made two rather poor landings, and in redressing from a steep *virage* it responded too quickly, like a tender-mouthed horse, and backed all over the place. The Vosges look much finer from a little

height, say twelve hundred metres, than from the ground. I got my motor throttled down so that it would almost take care of itself, and then pulled out my camera and snapped them. It may be blurred; if not I'll send it to you. I have yet to get my *Instruments de bord* properly fitted out. It's quite a job. The cockpit is so small that unless one takes great care they take up all the room and hide the gasolene gauge, etc. Also the machine-gun must go on the upper plane, and that must be regulated so that I can aim and also reload without inconvenience. Two or three days ought to see me ready. There are lots of skylarks on the field, so on account of the way they climb in air I propose to call my baby *l'alouette.*

Of course, since our machines have come, nary a Boche. Occasionally one is *signallé,* but not located. This evening one was seen over Lure. They even blew the *pompier* horns here. It turned out to be only Kiffin Rockwell at a higher altitude than usual.

Your loving
VICTOR.

Luxeuil, May 14, 1916.

Dear Alce: You must have a queer conception of an aeroplane, if you think I am going to cook those beef tablets on board, or run the likelihood of landing in such a desolate spot that I must camp out for the night! For Mexican reconnaissance that would do, but not here. Even in the upland country hereabouts I am ever in sight of thirty villages at a fair height, say 2000 metres, and over more populated districts, at 3000, I could probably count sixty. Well, the machines are all here and tried: I made my first two trips over the enemy yesterday and the day before. Cowdin and Prince returned from Paris with a press reporter, and a cinema yesterday. Well, we

pulled it off this morning despite the rain and low clouds. I never was so be-photo'd or ever hope to be again. In large groups and small ones; singly, talking, and silent; in the air, and on the ground, by " movies " and in poses. The United Press reporter was fine, beaming all over with the thrills of it. " Hated to sink his individuality but had to promise to give it to *all* the papers to get the job." " First time he'd been to the Front " (Front! sixty-five kilometres to leeward of it), " or been on an aviation ground with *so* many machines " (Many! thirty!), and he smiled with his gold teeth and spectacles, like the matron of a boarding-house. The first part was the most difficult, and everybody had some suggestion to make, more brilliant than the last. And nobody agreed with the movie man, who planted himself firmly in the middle of the field, 500 yards off, and waited for the *cage-à-poules* to come on. Of course we ran in the M. F.'s,—a *simulacre* bombardment, don't you see. Pleased Captain Happe immensely, *we* to accompany and to protect the big machine! First, the Farmans lined up, roared and buzzed, and by ones and twos flitted past the camera man up into the air. Then one at a time we bumped out and rushed by him. I must say that he had nerve for we *décollé'd* just before him, and, after a turn of the field, we each dived just over him, then came round and landed. You will see it all, I expect, sometime this summer; for it is to be given to some American cinema company in Paris, I understand. Kiffin and Berty Hall were much peeved to think that some —— person was going to make heaps of money out of us, and we'd risked our necks for nothing. (None of us liked to manœuvre so close together with the *plafond* at 300 metres). " Think of the honor," said I. "Oh, no, give me the cash and keep it," said Bert.

We had a most gorgeous lunch for our guests today,—the good woman outdid herself. Eight or ten courses, it seemed, and we served up some good wine—*Rudesheimer* and *Pommard.* It's wonderful what a cellar she has; even M. de Sillac commented on it, and the Captain from *État-major* I had forgotten to mention. As for Mr. Wader, he took it all in. I know he'll write up a most enraptured account of us. Then we hustled them all off in an auto for the train, including Prince, who is still to get his machine at Bourget. Weather is still over-cast. Perhaps we shall make another trip across the lines. In any case I have learned more about flying in the last five days than in the five preceding months, such it is to have one's own machine. But I am far from being a *pilote* yet. Of course I am delighted to have the meat tablets, and shall use them all the same. Yesterday I flew over the Valley where we were camped last August—tiny it looked. The chief regret I have is that I cannot seem to get my old Corporal Bianchi out as my mechanic.

Your loving
VICTOR.

Verdun, Esc. N. 129. S. P. 24,
May 23.

Dear Cousin Helen: Many, many thanks for the books. All but one of them are new to me and I shall enjoy re-reading the "Ordeal by Battle."

We are really settling down to work, and I begin to feel I am actively saving France and no longer toying with her expensive utensils.

I got in 27 hours flying over the Boche lines, the week before leaving, but had no luck in running on a Boche. Two of my companions, however, finished off two Germans.

Now we are at —— shucks! I forgot the censor. Anyway, I think I may say, morning and evening, when the weather permits we fly high and low over that smouldering inferno which has been raging since February. Yesterday morning from St. M—— to the Argonne and back again well inside their lines, over 2½ miles high (4,300 metres) : yesterday afternoon low, to protect a slow machine from Douaumont to Cote 304; back and forth for an hour and a half.

The landscape—one wasted surface of brown powdered earth, where hills, valleys, forest and villages all merged in phantoms—was boiling with puffs of dark smoke. Even above my engine's roar I could catch reports now and then.

To the rear, on either side, tiny sparks like flashes of a mirror, hither and yon, in the woods and dales, denoted the heavy guns which were raising such dust.

One of my fellows who was flying high to protect us, fell upon a Boche and brought him down.

I think it must be my turn soon. Even from above, one had the sense of great activity and force in the country to the rear. From every wood and hedge peeped out "*parcs*" of autos, wagons, tents and shelters,—while all the roadsides showed white and dusty with the ceaseless travel.

I have since heard we retook the fort of Douaumont but lost "Homme Mort" while I was flying overhead; smoke completely hid the infantry, I suppose, besides I was busy keeping beside the *réglage* machine.

Your affectionate,
VICTOR.

June 1st, 1916.

Dear Papa: This flying is much too romantic to be real modern war with all its horrors. There is something so unreal and fairy like about it, which ought

to be told and described by Poets, as Jason's Voyage was, or that Greek chap who wandered about the Gulf of Corinth and had giants try to put him in beds that were too small for him, etc.

Yesterday afternoon it was bright but full of those very thick fuzzy clouds like imaginary froth of gods or genii. We all went out. All but I and the Captain got lost and turned back, so we two flitted about over mountains of fleecy snow full of shadow and mist. He reminded me of the story of the last fly on a polar expedition as I followed his black silhouette. I went down to a field near the front and flew again at five o'clock. Then it was marvelous. At 3000 metres one floated secure on a purple sea of mist. Up through it, here and there, voluminous clouds resembling those thick water plants that grow in ponds; and far over this ocean, other white rounded ones just protruding, like strands on some distant mainland. Deep below me I could just distinguish enough of the land now and again to know my whereabouts,—the winding Meuse in its green flood banks or that smouldering Etna, Douaumont. But off to the north, hovering and curveting over one of the bleached coral strands like seagulls—not Nieuports surely! They were the modern harpies: the German machines for the chase. In the still gray mist below now and again I caught sight of a Farman or Caudron sweeping over the corner of the lines to see some battery fire. But as I peered down, a livid white object moved under me going south, with the tail of a skate. "There is my fish and prey," I thought as I pointed down after the German *réglage* machine, "but prudence first." So I searched in the water-plant clouds. Yes, sure enough the venomous creatures are there, as dark specks resembling the larvae one sees in brackish water,—three of them moving the same way. Those are the

Fokkers. I did not want to have them fall on my neck when I dived on the fat greasy Boche!

This morning we all started off at three, and, not having made concise enough arrangements, got separated in the morning mist. I found Prince, however, and we went to Douaumont where we found two German *réglage* machines unprotected and fell upon them. A skirmish, a spitting of guns, and we drew away. It had been badly executed that manœuvre! But ho! another Boche heading for Verdun! Taking the direction stick between my knees I tussled and fought with the *mitrailleuse* and finally charged the *rouleau,* all the while eyeing my Boche and moving across Vaux towards Etain. I had no altitude with which to overtake him, but a little more speed. So I got behind his tail and spit till he dived into his own territory. Having lost Norman, I made a tour to the Argonne and on the way back saw another fat Boche. "No protection machine in sight." I swooped, swerved to the right, to the left, almost lost, but then came up under his lee keel by the stern. (It's the one position they cannot shoot from.) I seemed a dory alongside a schooner. I pulled up my nose to let him have it. Crr—Crr—Crr—a cartridge jammed in the barrel. He jumped like a frog and fled down to his grounds. Later in the morning I made another stroll along the lines. Met a flock of Nieuports, and saw across the way a squad of white-winged L. V. G. How like a game of prisoner's base it all is! I scurry out in company, and they run away. They come into my territory and I being alone, take to my heels. They did come after me once too! Faster they are than I, but I had height so they could but leer up at me with their dead-white wings and black crosses like sharks, and they returned to their own domain.

This afternoon we left together, it being our turn

for the lines at 12:30. The rolly-poly cotton wool clouds were thick again. Popping in and out of them, I ran upon some blue puffs such as one sees when the artillery has been shooting at aeroplanes. "Strange phenomena, perhaps there exist blue puffs like that." Yesterday I had fruitlessly chased about such puffs to find the Avions. More smoke balls! There above me, like a black beetle, was the Boche! But well above me, and heading for his lines. For twenty minutes I followed that plane ever in front of me, and inch by inch, almost imperceptibly I gained in height and distance. He veered off to give me a broadside; I ducked away behind his tail; he turned off again; I repeated, but I did not have enough extra speed to manœuvre close to him, though I temporarily cut off his retreat. After three passages-at-arms he got away. Then like a jack-ass I went on to Verdun and found no one. On my return what tales were told! The Boches had come over Bar-le-Duc and plentifully shelled it; two of our pilots had their reservoirs pierced and one had not returned. The town, the station, the aviation field all shelled—40 killed, including ten school children. (And we had word this morning that Poincaré has formally forbidden bombardment of every description, even on arm factories—it might kill civilians.) Yes, this is what comes of getting notoriety. There were disgusting notices about us in the papers two days ago,—even yesterday. I am ashamed to be seen in town today if our presence here has again caused death and destruction to innocent people. It would seem so. That Boche at Luxeuil, by the way, came again after we left, on the day and at the hour when the funeral services were being held. But through telephone they got out a Nieuport *escadrille* and cut off his retreat, bringing him down on the French trenches. By the papers on him he

was identified as a one-time waiter in the Lion Vert now, of course, a German officer.

June 2.

It was a bit of self-importance to say the Boche came here for us. General Petain's General Staff had just moved here, and besides, Amiens, Chalons, Épernay were all bombarded. It is a shame some of us did not get one of the hogs fair and square on our ground. Norman Prince says he possessed one, but, in charging rolls, cut the contact with his elbow and came down, thinking he had a *panne*. McConnell, who was lost (he only arrived for lunch an hour before and had never seen a Boche), had a good set-to, but he finally got away. So he wandered south, way off his map, and finally came down on a deceptive field which smashed him up.

Your loving
VICTOR.

June 5, 1916.

Dear Alce: From now on you must not believe too much of what the papers say, we made the mistake of letting —— do a little publicity, and he has very bad taste. The reporters in town see their chance for news; and they will soon have us bringing down a German a day apiece, and dying gloriously weekly. I am reported killed twice already, and more than one of us is severely wounded several times. Nothing much has happened, intermittent rainy weather. Oliver Wolcott, Carlton Burr, and a couple of other Harvard men whom I knew in college are with the Ambulance here. They all behaved very well and picked up the dead and wounded off the streets at the time of the raid. We had another *alerte* yesterday; but the Boches did not come here. Hall surprised one further north and thinks he got him; but

the German plane fell through the clouds, and Hall could not see if he hit the earth or not. I ran a-foul of two with Prince yesterday morning, but we did not have unity or concentration of attack enough to get them. I enclose a few awful photos which may interest you. I am most proud and interested in having *both* Conrad and Chanler going to Military Camps. I am sure it will do them a world of good, especially since they are both so anxious to go. I don't think "Pitty Con" will be physically injured: remember Alan Seeger was an appalling wreck before the war.

Everyone says they get tired of flying, "It's monotonous." I don't see it, but on the contrary, an infinite variety is this, when there is a slight sprinkling of clouds. Clouds are not thin pieces of blotting paper; but liquid, ceaselessly changing steam. I played hide-and-seek in and out them yesterday; sometimes flat blankets like melting snow on either side below me, or again, like great ice floes with distant bergs looming up, and "open water" near at hand, blue as a moonstone cloud, floating full, for all the world like a gigantic jelly-fish (those that have red trailers and a sting). In the nearer pools the mottled earth, pie-bald with sun and shadow, showed through; and it was thanks to these I knew my whereabouts. I was going from below the clouds to above them, circling in some hole; thus I realized the size and thickness of the walls,—300 metres sheer from top to base of dazzling whiteness. Some have many feathery, filmy points and angles, others are rounded and voluminous, with cracks and caverns in them. These are all the fair-weather, fleecy clouds; for there are the lower, flatter, misty ones, and the speckled, or mare's tail clouds, above which one never reaches. There are such a lot of trumpet-shaped and wind blown clouds

this evening that I should like to go out and examine them; but it's a bore for my mechanic, and I doubt if I could go high enough to warrant crossing the lines.

Your loving
VICTOR.

[Victor was quite aware that he was going to be killed, and three days before his death he said in an off-hand way to his Uncle Willy, "Of course I shall never come out of this alive." When writing to his parents, however, he seems to have thought he could convince them that the life he was leading contained no element of danger. EDITOR.]

June 6, 1916.

Dear Alce: Why so fearful? Please don't worry so—and never for one instant believe what you see in the papers. What you saw and heard about me on the 17th of May *never happened* at all! On May 14th, as I told you a reporter and a cinema came out. Of course the fool reporter had to write up a "story" of what he saw,—I saw it in the Paris Herald. It was all rot and rotten from beginning to end. "Weary hours waiting for the return from the bombardment," etc. We were in the air just twenty minutes and never out of sight that day. I suppose to make it realistic he had to pick out one who did not return on time to increase the suspense; and he happened to take me. I can imagine how this lie when regarnished and served up afresh might look awful. All you need do in the future is to serenely ignore it as fiction stuffing for hungry newspaper columns.

As I said in the last letters, we are not giving out any more news even to reporters who worm their way here. It's disgusting; for we are novices, and it bores the old French *pilotes*. Besides we missed our

chance when the Boches came over Bar. Mr. Charles Prince came out and dined with us last night.

Your loving
VICTOR.

June 14, 1916.

Dear Alce: As usual you and the papers know more than I about the business here. I have not done anything as yet to be rewarded or promoted for. I am not yet a Sergeant. To be sure I was proposed: every *pilote* is automatically proposed after twenty hours' flight, just as everyone is made a Corporal when he is *breveté*. It seems an exceptional chance for getting into the public eye, though, I must say. It's too bad I'm not going into politics after the war so that I could make use of all this free advertising. I might almost run for the Assembly so as not to lose such a golden opportunity! Anyway, Conrad and Chanler are benefiting. I take it they will be pointed out at the Military Camps: "Hist! Dat guy has a brudder in the real War. He kills Chermans every mornin' like sparrers." Meanwhile I sit in an upper window with waves of leaden clouds drifting by, and the indefatigable graphophone churns out some vulgar tune below, and the other "heroes" play poker, and the Captain practices scales on the piano. It is disintegrating to mind and body,—this continued *inertia*.

Your last letters don't mention politics. In the French papers, on the contrary, there are daily most exhaustive articles on the Republican convention: the ideals and connections of Roosevelt: the sympathies of Hughes: the betting and so forth. These items rival in space and head lines the Russian advance and quite put in the shade the Italian resistance and ministerial crises. . . . Your loving

VICTOR.

VICTOR CHAPMAN

It is not true he died in France;
  His spirit climbs the serried years
  Victorious over empty fears
And proof of Freedom's last advance.

The handful of his mortal clay
  May drift upon a foreign breeze
  To burgeon into flowers and trees
That make the diadem of May.

Himself still lives, and cannot die
  While freemen shun the tyrant's heel,
  While minds are true and hearts are leal,
And men look upward to the sky.

Compact of elemental fire
  And heart untouched by easy fear,
  His vision measures fair and clear
The worth of ultimate desire.

For him no blight of searing age;
  Eternal youth is his and joy—
  The cheerful gladness of the boy
Shall be his constant heritage.

Mourn not for that devoted head;
  He is the spirit of our race
  Triumphant over Time and Space—
He cannot die; he is not dead.

Benjamin Apthorp Gould

ADDENDA

ADDENDA

DICTÉE DU MÉCANO

Louis Bley—

Ce jour-là, le jour de sa mort, il y avait eu une sortie sur Verdun le matin. Chapman en était, et est rentré à 9 heures, faisant un atterrissage un peu brutal qui eut pour résultat de couper un sandov. Mais voilà qu'on nous signale des Boches venant sur Bar-le-Duc. J'étais en train de réparer le sandov, mais il me prend tous mes outils, les envoie promener en me disant, " Laissez celà tranquille, il faut que j'aille voir les Boches." Alors je lui dis qu'il ne pouvais pas partir avec le sandov coupé, et que je ne voulais pas le laisser partir car c'était trop dangereux, il pouvait capoter ou avoir un accident à l'atterrissage. Comme réponse, il dit: " Celà m'est égal de capoter," ce qui voulait dire, " Celà m'est égal ce qui m'arrive du moment que je descends un Boche." Mais il ne partit pas. Après cela il alla déjeuner et comme il y allait avoir une sortie à midi et demi, je changeais ses bougies d'allumage, mettant des bougies Boches à la place des autres car il aimait bien mieux ces bougies-là. Il est revenu à midi un quart et m'a demandé si l'appareil était prêt, je lui réponds que oui et je lui dis, " Je vous ai mis des bougies Boches." Il était très content et m'a dit qu'il allait les essayer. Il me donna un assez gros paquet de journaux, avec des oranges et du chocolat me disant, " Je vais aller faire un tour sur les lignes et à mon retour j'atterrirai à Vatlincourt (derrière Verdun) et j'irai porter les oranges et le chocolat à ce pauvre

Balsley à l'ambulance, car je crois qu'il n'y a plus beaucoup d'espoir de le sauver." Alors j'ai mis le paquet les oranges et le chocolat en place pour qu'il puisse aller les porter à son camarade. Il m'a serré la main et est parti en me disant, " Au revoir, je ne resterai pas longtemps."

Deux jours avant on était en train de régler sa mitrailleuse, mais voyant ses camarades partir, il court à son appareil, saute dedans et le voilà parti sans prendre de combinaison, c'est-à-dire dans ses habits ordinaires, sur les lignes ennemies.

A la dernière sortie sur Verdun qu'il a fait avec son appareil de 80 chevaux, il a été blessé par une balle qui lui a effleuré le cuir chevelu, un tout petit peu plus bas il pouvait être tué. Dans cette sortie, une balle avait coupé les cisailles de gauchissement, une balle avait coupé le tendeur interieur d'une aile et traversé une roue, une balle explosive avait traversé la pièce qui soutient le plan supérieur, une balle explosive avait traversé le pare-brise et une balle avait effleuré le plaquage du fuselage, et c'est cette dernière balle qui lui avait effleuré le crane. Il descendit à Vatlincourt se faire panser et revint à nos baraquements aux environs de Bar-le-Duc à trois heures et demie, et comme il y avait une sortie pour quatre heures sur Verdun, il voulait repartir en dépit de sa blessure. Le capitaine Thenault le lui défendit et pour son courage il lui promit un appareil de 110 chevaux. Chapman était très heureux. C'est à sa deuxième sortie avec cet appareil qu'il a été tué.

Une fois à Luxeuil-les-Bains, il est rentré avec une balle explosive qui a passé sous le coeur du fuselage de l'appareil, est sortie sur le côté et a éclaté sur le tendeur. Cette même fois une balle lui est rentrée dans la manche gauche et est ressortie de même en frôlant la chair et en le brûlant légèrement sur la

peau. L'après-midi de ce même jour après une autre sortie il est rentré avec une balle qui avait traversé le capot aluminium du moteur.

Pour ne pas être visible dans son nouvel appareil, son appareil de 80 chevaux était un appareil tout blanc, tandis que l'appareil de 110 chevaux était peint couleur verte comme de l'herbe, il s'était amusé, deux jours avant sa mort, à gratter la peinture verte avec une pièce de 10 centimes, pour que l'appareil soit moins visible. Moi, son mécanicien, j'avais peint le fuselage en gris de ciel clair. La peinture n'était pas sèche le lendemain lorsque Chapman apprend que des Boches étaient sur Verdun et il part quand même avec son appareil pas sec. Je n'étais pas content et je lui ai fait voir qu'il ferait mieux de rester, il n'a pas voulu et m'a dit: " Je me fous de la peinture. Si j'abats mon Boche, cela vaudra bien une couche de peinture."

Une fois, il piqua sur un Boche et l'approcha à quatre mètres. Il m'a dit que ses roues touchaient presque le plan supérieur de l'avion Boche, et qu'il aurait pu le tirer à bout portant avec son browning qui ne le quittait jamais du reste quand il volait, mais il ne pouvait le sortir de son étui à cause de la manoeuvre.

Une autre fois il reste trois heures 20 sur les lignes allemandes et atterrit au hangar avec trois litres d'essence dans son réservoir seulement, chose très dangereuse.

Il est resté une fois à voler dans une journée 7 heures sur les lignes allemandes. Il a fait 70 heures de vol sur son appareil de 80 chevaux sans jamais rien casser. C'était un pilote merveilleux. Qu'il soit de garde ou non, dès qu'on annonçait des avions Boches, il sautait dans son appareil et partait. Il n'y en avait pas un comme lui.

Pour les départs sur les lignes allemandes il était

toujours le premier parti et il était le dernier rentré et volait toujours seul. Si un de ses camarades était en danger il se précipitait à son secours. Mais lui ne se préoccupait jamais si il était suivi ou soutenu. C'était le plus courageux de tous.

Une fois il rencontra 15 avions Boches et vola sur eux visant dans le tas. A l'atterrissage le capitaine Thenault le dispute mais cela lui était égal. Sa réponse était toujours: "Si je peux avoir un avion Boche!"

CITATION FROM THE JOURNAL OFFICIEL

Oct. 7, 1916.

Chapman (Victor) sergeant pilote à l'escadrille N. 124: pilote de chasse qui était un modèle d'audace, d'énergie et d'entrain et faisait l'admiration de ses camarades d'escadrille. Sérieusement blessé à la tête le 17 juin, a demandé à ne pas interrompre son service. Quelques jours plus tard, s'étant lancé à l'attaque de plusieurs avions ennemis, a trouvé une mort glorieuse au cours de la lutte.

PRINTED IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

THE following pages contain advertisements of a few of the Macmillan books on kindred subjects.

With the Flying Squadron

By HAROLD ROSHER

$1.25

"A stirring narrative of adventure which gives the reader many a thrill and which shows an entirely new side of the war—distinctly new in that this is the first great conflict in which the aeroplane has played an important part. One does not see the horror of warfare in Mr. Rosher's writing, as the air-pilot is apparently further removed from scenes of bloodshed and carnage than other officers in the service; it is largely a feeling of exhilaration, of breathless daring which he experiences and these characteristics are well imparted to the reader in Mr. Rosher's sketches."—*Philadelphia Press.*

"There is perhaps no book in the entire round of warlike publications which gives to the civilian so strong a sense of the utter recklessness and of the assured certainty of the aviator's eventual fate. . . . There has been heretofore published no such ample, convincing portrayal of the life of an air-fighter as is disclosed in these letters. . . . Lieutenant Rosher's terse, dramatic letters vividly foreshadow the new period and method of warlike adventure."

"One of the most fascinating documents which the war has produced."—*Churchman.*

"Fullest and most convincing pictures of the air fighters' existence that have yet been offered to the public."—*Boston Globe.*

THE MACMILLAN COMPANY
Publishers 64–66 Fifth Avenue New York

Italy, France and Britain at War

By H. G. WELLS,

Author of "Mr. Britling Sees it Through," "What is Coming," etc.

Cloth, 12mo, $1.50

Mr. Wells first discusses the changing sentiment as regards the war in the different countries where it is being waged. He then takes up the war in Italy—The Isonzo Front, The Mountain Warfare, and Behind the Front. After this comes a section devoted to the Western war, with chapters on Ruins, Grades of War, The War Landscape, New Arms for Old Ones, and Tanks. Finally comes the part in which Mr. Wells asks, "What do people think about the war?" Here he presents such problems as "Do they really think at all? The Yielding Pacifist, and The Conscientious Objector, The Religious Revival, The Riddle of the British, The Social Changes in Progress and The Ending of the War."

The dates appended to the different chapters show that they were written the latter part of 1916, thus embodying the distinguished author's latest thoughts on the European tragedy.

"Rarely has Mr. Wells sent forth a volume more brilliant, keener in its thinking, truer in its perceptions, while the author's restless intelligence makes it possible, necessary indeed, for him to include such questions as the world control of agriculture, the development of a new religion, the passing of the hero, the other matters upon which he talks with illumination and the deepest conviction. . . . He has said it with compactness and earnestness and in neat, closely trimmed sentences that often sparkle with epigrammatic wit."—*N. Y. Times.*

"Mr. Wells, the pacifist, has contributed to the literature of the war the most brilliant exposition yet published. There are many great pages in the volume—those on the effigy and General Joffre and the perfected French method of offensive warfare, for instance; and his comparison between the French and English officers is a miracle of frankness. . . .—*Philadelphia Public Ledger.*

THE MACMILLAN COMPANY

Publishers **64–66 Fifth Avenue** **New York**

Mr. Britling Sees it Through

$1.60

"A powerful, strong story. . . . Has wonderful pages . . . gems of emotional literature. . . . Nothing could express the whole, momentous situation in England and in the United States in so few words and such convincing tone. . . . For clear thinking and strong feeling the finest picture of the crises in the Anglo-Saxon world that has yet been produced."—*Philadelphia Ledger.*

"The most thoughtfully and carefully worked out book Mr. Wells has given us for many a year. . . . A veritable cross-section of contemporary English life . . . admirable, full of color and utterly convincing."—*New York Times.*

"A war epic. . . . To read it is to grasp as perhaps never before the state of affairs among those to whom war is the actual order of the day. Impressive, true, tender . . . infinitely moving and potent."—*Chicago Herald.*

"The most significant and impressive book which has come from Mr. Wells' pen. . . . A strong book that every reader must prize."—*New York World.*

THE MACMILLAN COMPANY

Publishers 64–66 Fifth Avenue New York

Gallipoli

By JOHN MASEFIELD

$1.35

"This is a miniature epic, or saga, its eloquent but unforced prose making it a book that will stand high among Masefield's productions. . . . Masefield writes of the military aspect of the campaign with a rare facility for pictorial expression . . . a splendid story of bravery splendidly told."—*New York Evening Post.*

"A piece of literature so magnificent, so heroic, so heartbreaking that it sends us back to the Greek epics for comparison, and sweeps us again, breathless, with tears in our eyes, to look upon the brave deeds and the agonies of our time. . . . Mr. Masefield's book gives us a record of heroism which we can well believe unequaled, which cannot be excelled."—*New York Times.*

The Insurrection in Dublin

By JAMES STEPHENS

$1.25

"Big books have already been written on the subject of the Dublin insurrection, but Mr. Stephens' book is by far the most satisfactory and sympathetic account of it that we have read. It is an excellent piece of writing, admirable in tone and spirit."—*New York Globe.*

THE MACMILLAN COMPANY
Publishers 64-66 Fifth Avenue New York

THE WAR IN THE AIR

By H. G. Wells.

Decorated cloth, Illustrated, 12mo, $1.50

In this breathlessly interesting story of battle and adventure in the clouds, Mr. Wells describes the havoc and devastation wrought by the new engines of war. No accounts of the aerial bombardments and battles of the present European struggle are as vivid and as scientifically true as those contained in this remarkable book, written over six years ago.

Mr. Wells is beyond question the most plausible romancer of the time. . . . He unfolds a breathlessly interesting story of battle and adventure, but all the time he is thinking of what our vaunted strides in mechanical invention may come to mean. . . . Again and again the story, absorbing as it is, brings the reader to a reflective pause."—*The New York Tribune.*

AIRCRAFT IN WAR

By J. M. Spaight, LL.D.

Author of "War Rights on Land."

8vo, $2.00

"A thoroughly sound and comprehensive survey of a problem which is only just entering the field of international politics. . . . Clear and free enough from technical difficulties to make it extremely interesting to every class of intelligent reader who desires to be informed upon the rapidly changing conditions of modern warfare."—*London Daily Telegraph.*

"Dr. Spaight's views and proposals will undoubtedly be received with respect and read with interest."—*London Globe.*

STABILITY IN AVIATION

By G. H. Bryan.

Cloth, Illustrated, 8vo, $2.00

This work will lead to aeroplane stability being made the subject of much more continuous study and investigation than has been possible in the past. The author's conclusions show that there should be no difficulty in securing inherent stability, both longitudinal and lateral, in an aeroplane, by means of suitably placed auxiliary surfaces rigidly attached to the machine.

THE MACMILLAN COMPANY

Publishers 64–66 Fifth Avenue New York

book is DUE on the last date stamped below

University of California, Los Angeles
L 005 794 479 5

UC SOUTHERN REGIONAL LIBRARY FACILIT
AA 001 290 018 9

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA
LOS ANGELES
LIBRARY